











MILTON'S

POETICAL WORKS.

BOGUE'S ILLUSTRATED EDITION.



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THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

JOHN MILTON.

WITH A MEMOIR,

AND CRITICAL REMARKS ON HIS GENIUS AND WRITINGS,

BY JAMES MONTGOMERY;

AND ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY ENGRAVINGS BY JOHN THOMPSON, S. AND T. WILLIAMS, O. SMITH, J. LINTON, ETC.

FROM DRAWINGS BY WILLIAM HARVEY.

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MEMOIR

OF

JOHN MILTON,

WITH STRICTURES ON HIS GENIUS AND WRITINGS.

LITTLE more than a brief memoir, and a few strictures on the principal poems of the Author of "Paradise Lost," can be attempted here.

JOHN MILTON was born December 6th, 1608, in London. His father was a scrivener in large practice, and his mother a lady from Wales. Of them he has left this testimony in reference to his own origin:-"Born in London, of honourable parentage, my father a man of the highest integrity, my mother of most virtuous character, and especially distinguished throughout the neighbourhood for her charities." His father, besides possessing a fine taste in literature, excelled in music, "equalling in science, if not in genius, the best composers of the age." His talents are gracefully recorded in the Latin verses addressed to him by his greater son, who, in after life, however he may have disappointed certain paternal hopes of his advancement, through the law or the church, abundantly compensated for this by his transcendent excellence in the highest of the polite arts.

VOL. I.

Successively, under the roof of his parents, afterwards at St. Paul's School, and in due course at the University of Cambridge, young Milton received his education, and so profited by his diligence, that he came forth, in the issue, "a ripe scholar and a good one," before he had arrived at his twenty-first year. Through all his writings, whether prose or verse, his learning appears in the array of his thoughts, as well as in their adornment; however original, unborrowed, and independent of precedent or authorities these may have been. His vein for poetry showed itself early; but, till he approached manhood, this was principally exercised in Latin compositions, though occasional experiments in his own tongue strengthened and prepared his style for greater achievements in the sequel. At the age of ten years he was a poet, says Aubrey; and his fond father, to encourage him in "the idle trade" that was to "cross" his own "hopes," employed Cornelius Jansen to paint the portrait of so promising a son, "a half-length, in laced ruffles," at the price of "five broad pieces:" no small sum for the honour of the little minstrel.

During this period of his life, and onward, he thus speaks of his studies:—"I must say that, after I had, for my first years, by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father (whom God recompense!) been exercised to the tongues, and some science as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers, both at home and at the schools, it was found that, whether aught was imposed on me by them that had the overlooking, or betaken to of mine own choice, in English, or other tongue, prosing or versing, but chiefly the latter, the style, by certain vital signs it had, was likely to live. But, much latelier, in the private academies of Italy,

whither I was favoured to resort, perceiving that some trifles which I had composed at twenty, or thereabout * * * * met with acceptance above what was looked for :- and other things, which I had shifted (in scarcity of books and conveniences) to patch up among them, were received with written encomiums, which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men on this side of the Alps :- I began thus to assent both to them, and divers of my friends at home, and not less an inward prompting, which now grew daily upon me, that, by labour and intense study (which I take to be my portion in this life), I might, perhaps, leave something so written to after-times as they should not willingly let die."-Preface to the Second Book of Church Government. A noble purpose truly, and so fulfilled in "after-times," that his countrymen will never cease to utter what he has taught his native tongue to say.

From the time of leaving Cambridge, in 1632, Milton resided five years with his father, on an estate which the latter had purchased at Horton, in the county of Bucks. This was the golden age of his life, when he was more at home, at peace, and in the enjoyment of health and happiness, than during any following period. Here, too, the most precious portions of his poetry, in point of richness of imagery, brilliance of colouring, and liveliness of description, were the fruits of that lucid interval of retirement. Whatever may be surmised in disparagement of his temper, either in domestic or public life, Milton must have been a dutiful and amiable son, to have continued with his parents through so long a term, in "the prime of manhood, where youth ended."

In 1637, on the death of his mother, he obtained permission to visit Italy on a musical, as well as poetical, tour, to collect for his father the compositions of

the great masters in the one art; while, for himself, he hoped to gather inspiration towards excelling in the other, by personal intercourse with the most accomplished literati there. By these he was everywhere courteously welcomed, and many poetical compliments were exchanged between the stranger and his new friends, of which several have escaped oblivion, by being usually bound up with his better productions. This circumstance proves that, though he had not then appeared as the author of any considerable work, his reputation for genius and learning was already established at home; and his claims on that account were generously recognised by illustrious foreigners in that land from which the Muses had last departed, when the northern barbarians converted Italy into a southern Scandinavia -the first land, also, to which they returned on the revival of letters in western Europe, after ten centuries of suspended animation.

It had been his purpose, on setting out, to proceed to Greece, yet more celebrated for arts, if not for arms, than Rome itself. But a voice from the far distant isles—by his classical prototypes despised and described as "cut off from the civilised world"—reached his ear. The cry of his country in distress called him home, and home therefore he hastened, after an absence of fifteen months, fully purposing, whatever that might be, to do his duty by the exercise of one of his talents, which, though not yet proved, he had assiduously cultivated from his youth upward; as he bravely avowed on a certain occasion—"I have determined to lay up, as the best treasure and solace of good old age, if God vouch-safe it to me, the honest liberty of free speech."

On the next long and arduous stage of Milton's life, during "the Great Rebellion," as it has been called, and under the Commonwealth, from 1638 till the restoration of Charles II., in 1660, he was incessantly engaged in political controversy on all manner of debatable subjects, in that civil war of words as well as swords; or else more soberly employed in official business as Latin secretary to Cromwell.

Whatever honour he may have won, with a due proportion of obloquy, at the time, and each cleaving to his memory with a tenacity not likely to be neutralized,—in either case, with parties less prejudiced than his antagonists and his admirers (to one or other of which classes all his biographers hitherto have belonged), Milton does not seem to have enriched himself with any considerable share of the spoil that fell to the disposal of Cromwell, beyond the moderate salary for his secretaryship; a thousand pounds, received by him for one of his most obnoxious publications (which had the further honour of being burned by the hands of the common hangman, after the return of the Stuarts); and the small fragment of a forfeited estate, of which he was afterwards deprived.

How zealously soever affected he may have been in what he deemed a good cause, while fighting the penand-ink battles of his country, he confesses that it was at a great sacrifice of feeling, as well as convenience, that he engaged in the strife. These are his words: "If I were wise only to my own ends, I would certainly take such a subject [for literary composition] as of itself might catch applause (whereas this hath all the disadvantages on the contrary), and such as the publishing whereof might be delayed at pleasure, and time enough to pencil it over with all the curious touches of art, even to the perfection of a faultless picture." Here he evidently alludes to the cherished

idea of an immortal work—probably the *Paradise Lost*, then but as a seed cast into the ground, and apparently dying before it could germinate, spring up, and grow into a tree of life. "Whereas," he continues, returning to his polemics, "in this argument, the not deferring is of great moment to the good speeding, so that if solidity have leisure to do her office, art cannot have much. Lastly, I should not choose this manner of writing, wherein, knowing myself to be inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account, but of my left hand!"—A left hand, indeed! but it dealt tremendous blows, and such

"As made all Europe ring from side to side,"

and only less formidable than those of Cromwell's mailed hand in the battle-fields of Great Britain and Ireland, laying on deadlier strokes than poet's pen or patriot's wrath could inflict on innocent paper. In this context occurs one of those proud betrayals of conscious pre-eminence which break out in our author's prose not less than his verse. Bespeaking pardon for his egotism, he says-"Although a poet, soaring in the high region of his fancies, with his garland and singing robes about him, might, without apology, speak more of himself than I mean to do; yet for me, sitting here in the cool element of prose, a mortal thing among many readers of no empyreal conceit, to venture and divulge of myself unusual things, I shall petition to the gentler sort it may not be envy to me."-Preface to Book II. of Church Government.

In 1643, Milton married Mary, daughter of Richard Powell, Esq., of Forest Hill, in Oxfordshire. For reasons not very clear, except a defect of congeniality in their respective habits, the lady left him a few weeks afterwards, on a visit to her friends, from which she long delayed, and eventually refused, to return to his house. Under this injury, the indignant husband wrote four tracts "On the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," in which, endeavouring, with as much labour in vain as could be desired, to press into the service of an infirm cause Scripture authorities and antiquated precedents, he hazarded sentiments which gave great offence to honest and ingenuous minds, unaccustomed to deceive themselves with specious sophistry, and fearing to be deceived by doctors of that school more learned and subtle than themselves. To the Christian, there can be but one law on the subject—that which is laid down by our Saviour himself—Matthew v. 6.

After various negotiations, into particulars of which there is neither room nor need to enter, the poet's wife returned to him; he received her kindly, and they lived together till her death, nine years afterwards. By her, Milton had three daughters; and Dr. Johnson, whose memoir contains scarcely a paragraph without a sarcasm or a slanderous hint against his noble victim's principles, or his conduct in public or private life-even Dr. Johnson adds on this subject-"It were injurious to omit, that Milton afterwards received her father and mother into his house, when they were distressed, with other royalists." The Doctor himself might have made many meritorious omissions in his biographical narrative, and the accompanying strictures, which abound with assertions, assumptions, and inuendoes, cruelly injurious to the memory of him to whom it was his duty to do justice, and who, had he been living, would not have accepted mercy at the hands of so inveterate an enemy.

Milton was now blind, and in need of a helpmate. He, therefore, soon afterwards married Catharine, the Moreover, she

daughter of Captain Woodcock, of Hackney. She, too, as his former wife, died in childbirth, within twelve months, and her husband honoured her memory with what Dr. Johnson calls "a poor sonnet." Be this as it may, it would not be easy to show, by examples, that a hundred wives, since the days of Adam and Eve, have been so "ensepulchred" in verse, which cannot be cancelled, "that (queens) for such a tomb might wish to die!" He speaks of her as his "late deceased saint," who appeared to him in a dream, her semblance being such

"——as yet once more I trust to have Full sight of her in heaven, without restraint."

"Came vested all in white, pure as her mind:
Her face was veil'd; yet, to my fancied sight,
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight:
But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I woke—she fled—and day brought back my night."

There is nothing more tender and delicate in all Petrarch's sonnets. To compensate for this loss, Milton entered a third time into the bands of matrimony with Elizabeth Minshull, of a good family in Cheshire, but "probably without a fortune," says Dr. Johnson. She has been represented as being a harsh mother-in-law to his children; and, unhappily, some circumstances of litigation between her and them, relative to the disposal of the poet's small property, on his decease, give colour to the imputation.

After the death of Cromwell, the retirement of his son Richard, and the restoration of Charles II., Milton was too conspicuous an object for retributive vengeance, not to fear a heavy visitation for his republican offences.

He escaped, however, rather by being overlooked than unsought for, if the contradictory statements are at all to be reconciled to truth or probability. Sir William Davenant, his brother-poet, and a zealous cavalier, had owed his life to the friendship of Milton, during the commonwealth's reign of terror; and now, on the turning of the scale, he repaid the obligation in kind, by interposing to save his quondam protector. This story is worth repeating, though, perhaps, not worth believing: vet (if apocryphal) it is one of those things concerning which we should not like to be undeceived. Another tradition, in a work called "A History of England" (Cunningham's), is, that, during the first keen search for victims, "Milton, Latin secretary to Cromwell, distinguished by his writings in favour of the rights and liberties of the people, pretended to be dead, and had a public funeral procession. The king applauded his policy in escaping the punishment of death by a seasonable show of dying." That the "merry monarch" would have laughed heartily at the hoax, if it had been successfully practised, is far more probable than that it was at all attempted.

It is pleasing to find that Dr. Johnson himself manifests something of kindly feeling, on this occasion, towards the man whom he openly or insidiously persecutes in every other stage of public or private life; though he ungraciously affects to disguise that very feeling from himself, saying, "It is not certain that Milton's life everwas in danger;" and, under this notion, adds—"It required no great interest to exempt Milton from a censure little more than verbal. Something may be reasonably ascribed to veneration and compassion; to veneration of his abilities, and compassion for his distresses, which made it fit to forgive his malice for his

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learning. He was now poor and blind, and who would pursue with violence an illustrious enemy, depressed by fortune and disarmed by nature?"—There is another plea why it should be "fit to forgive the malice for the learning," not of Milton only, but of his biographer himself, throughout this whole memoir. Both probably sinned "of malice prepense," but each, it may now be believed, acted conscientiously. In the courtesy of common charity, the sincerity of neither can be questioned; and here, at least, it may be forgiven to their present censor if he no longer seeks to "draw the frailties" of either illustrious offender from their dread abode."

Milton now turned the whole force of his genius to the completion of his earliest project—an heroic poem—always in his eye, never out of his mind, though the form of it was frequently changing, but not fully undertaken till he had been driven from the field of politics and controversy. Thus, till he had reached his sixtieth year, so little impatient was he of securing celebrity by the exercise of that very gift on which he most valued himself, that the whole bulk of his published poems scarcely amounted to a hundred pages of print; and when, at length, his greatest work was achieved, he committed it to its fate as confidently as though he had foreseen its posthumous fortune

"In the clear mirror of his ruling star."

And, if that was still to be a "hope deferred," it made not his "heart sick;" for he felt that it was within him already, like "the desire when it cometh"—the quickened germ of a "tree of life," under the shadow of whose boughs millions should sit with delight, and with the fruits of which generations unborn should be feasted.

Paradise Lost was published in 1667; Paradise

Regained, and Samson Agonistes, a tragedy, three years These, with L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Lycidas, Comus, and a series of Sonnets, with a few Juvenilia, in Latin, Italian, and English, completed his poetical works. Thus, though so early and passionately attached to the Muses, the products of his leisure till his thirtieth year were few and small; while, from that date till he had nearly doubled the term, he neither published, nor has there been recovered from the spoils of time, a single composition beyond the length of a psalm or a sonnet. Hence it appears that his youth and his old age he devoted to himself and his fame-his middle life to his country. The flower and the fruit of his genius were put forth and ripened in retirement; but after the flower had fallen, and while the fruit was maturing, he stood as thick of foliage, and as unpicturesque in appearance, as any orchard-tree in the dog-days; while-for here the metaphor must be dropped-he exerted, not expended his noble rage, and wielded, yet without exhaustion, his gigantic powers in polemical warfare and official drudgery as Latin secretary to Cromwell.

He died, in 1674, at his house in Bunhill-fields, and was buried next to his father, in the chancel of St. Giles, at Cripplegate.

The limits of this essay preclude any review of our author's numerous prose compositions. A few brief extracts, principally to illustrate his poetical character, may, however, be given.

In one of his bitterest controversial tracts, "The Apology for Smectymnuus," occur frequent passages of consummate beauty, referring to his early life and writings. Of his personal habits he thus speaks, in answer to his calumniators: "Those morning haunts

are where they should be—at home; not sleeping, or concocting the surfeits of an irregular feast, but up and stirring in winter, often ere the sound of any bell awaken men to labour or devotion; in summer, as oft with the bird that first rouses, or not much tardier, to read good authors, or cause them to be read, till the attention be weary, or the memory have its full fraught. Then, with useful and generous labours, preserving the body's health and hardiness, to render lightsome, clear, and not lumpish obedience to the mind, to the cause of religion and our country's liberty, when it shall require firm hearts in sound bodies, to stand and cover their stations, rather than see the ruin of our Protestantism, and the enforcement of a slavish life."

On the choice of modern authors in his youth, preferring the moral and the highest principled, he celebrates, "above them all, the two famous renowners of Beatrice and Laura (Dante and Petrarch), who never write but to the honour of those to whom they devote their verse, displaying sublime and pure thoughts without transgression. And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter, in things laudable, ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men, or famous cities, unless he have himself experience and practice of all that is praiseworthy."

In the next paragraph he proceeds: "That I may tell ye whither my younger feet wandered, I betook me among those lofty fables and romances which recount, in solemn cantos, the deeds of knighthood, founded by our victorious kings, and from hence had in renown over all Christendom. * * From the laureate fra-

ternity of poets, riper years, and the ceaseless round of studying and reading, led me to the shady spaces of philosophy, but chiefly to the divine volumes of Plato and his equal, Xenophon, where, if I should tell ye what I learnt of chastity and love—I mean that which is truly so, whose charming cup is only virtue, which she bears in her hand to those that are worthy,—the rest are cheated with a thick, intoxicating potion (which a certain sorceress, the abuser of love's name, carries about), and how the first and chiefest of love begins and ends in the soul, producing those happy twins of her divine generation, knowledge and virtue:—with such abstracted sublimities as these, it might be worth your listening, readers, as I may one day hope to have ye in a still time, where there shall be no chiding."

On his studies in religion, and their result, he next expatiates; and then, in a strain of admirable eloquence. lays down the qualifications of a true preacher of the gospel. Take one glowing image :- "In times of opposition, when, either against new heresies arising, or old corruptions to be reformed, the cool, unpassionate mildness of positive wisdom is not sufficient to damp and astonish the proud resistance of carnal and false doctors: then—that I may have leave to soar awhile, as the poets use-Zeal, whose substance is ethereal, arming in complete diamond, ascends his fiery chariot, drawn with two blazing meteors, figured like beasts, but of a higher breed than any the zodiac yields, resembling two of those four which Ezekiel and St. John saw-the one visaged like a lion, to express power, high authority, and indignation; the other of countenance like a man, to cast derision and scorn upon perverse and fraudulent seducers:-with these, the invincible warrior, Zeal, shaking loosely the slack reins, drives over the heads

of scarlet prelates, and such as are insolent to maintain traditions, bruising their stiff necks under his flaming wheels." This is poetry of the highest proof; and the passage is manifestly a first study of more than one of the scenes and actors in the war of angels, and the model of that "chariot of Paternal Deity" which bore Messiah to the battle, when

———— "under his burning wheels The steadfast empyréan shook throughout, All but the throne itself of God.

O'er shields, and helms, and helmed heads he rode Of thrones and mighty seraphim prostrate; That wish'd the mountains now might be again Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire."

PARADISE LOST, Book VI.

The most readable, and the least antiquated in subject and handling, of Milton's prose works, is entitled-"Areopagitica: a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, to the Parliament of England." The occasion was this: the presbyterian party in the commonwealth, having planted themselves in that power from which they had uprooted both the monarch and the nobles, became as tenacious of continuing the bondage of the press, as they had been indignant against the yoke when it was found galling and intolerable to themselves. This is probably the most complete and perfect oration in our language, a few only of Burke's masterpieces being so successfully elaborated as to stand in competition with it. Between the eloquence of Milton and that of the "old man eloquent," whom the French Revolution did not indeed destroy, but converted into a prophet as inspired as Cassandra, and by the multitude as little regarded when he gave note of evil tidings, there is considerable resemblance. The characteristics of both are intellectual strength, exuberant imagination, and impassioned utterance; while the style of each is marked by implicated sentences, with frequent parenthetic clauses breaking out, as through safetyvalves of over-pressed thought, into additional illustration, or matter unexpected by the reader, and apparently unpremeditated by the writer himself.

This specimen of Milton's rhetorical power as an advocate presents a galaxy of current thought, thick sown with stars, clustered or single, of every lustre, hue, and magnitude. Argument, illustration, fancy, wit, sarcasm, and noble sentiment, are here so closely arrayed, arranged, and concatenated, as are not often found in Milton himself; while the temper of the whole-except in a few passing strokes at the prelates—is not only blameless, but commendable. The theme is magnificent—the vindication of man's prerogative on earth above the brutes that perish-his realm of reason, and his sovereignty of speech. No brief quotations can give a just idea of the force and authority of plain truths, with which the undaunted republican addresses the rulers of his own party, when they were meditating to impose on the people, whom their prowess in the field had set free, the most hateful of all tyrannies, the enslavement of the press. "Give me," he exclaims, "the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely, above all liberties."

This treatise exemplifies all the excellences of Milton's manner, with fewer of its perplexities of syntax, and encumbrances of phrase; whereas, on other occasions, his sentences, in verse as well as in prose, too often resemble trees so loaded with fruit, that their branches are bent down to the ground, and sometimes even trail along it; while the symmetry and grace of his finest periods are disfigured by lumbering parentheses. In

many passages of his polemics there is an intensity of eloquence that seems to fuse the multitude of his thoughts, and send them, glowing white, from the crucible of his mind into the mind of the reader, scarcely able to contain them in the mould of his narrower conception. We find also an impetuosity and impatience in Milton's prose which never occurs in his verse. The vehemence of his argument, whether as an advocate or an accuser, carries him out of himself, in acrimonious invective or rapturous panegyric. There are poets and orators who have power so to possess the faculties of their audiences, that, while under the spell, the voice of no other charmer can affect them, charm he never so wisely. Milton was one of these, but he must be deeply studied at first, and then the larger the draughts, the more inspiring they become, from the inexhaustible fountain of his soul-a soul that transfuses itself for a while through our own, as the oracle of old is said to have inspired the Pythoness. In poetry, his genius never flares out into excess, though often, as already intimated, it does so in prose. Yet how far more commanding is the splendour, fixed in a star, than that which vanishes in a meteor, though the latter may strike with more startling amaze at the moment. And how much more glorious is the wonder-working power of a sovereign intelligence, when under control, and doing without violence whatever it will, than when, rabid with rage, it falls, though in thunderbolts, from "the highest heaven of invention," to the gross regions of earthly passion.

One paragraph from this brave defence of that which is itself the defence of all other liberties, the liberty of the press, shall be offered in proof of the marvellous excellence here ascribed to that treatise: "I deny not but that it is of greatest concernment in the church and commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves, as well as men; and thereafter to confine in prison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors; for books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a progeny of life in them, to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are. Nay, they do preserve, as in a vial, the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragons' teeth; and, being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men.

"And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man, kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burthen to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. It is true no age can restore a life, whereof, perhaps, there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for want of which whole nations fare worse. We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against the living labours of public men; -- how we spill that seasoned life of man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom; and, if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaving of an elemental life, but strikes at the ethereal and fifth essence, the breath of reason itself,-slays an immortality rather than a life."

Turning to those compositions on which his fame VOL. I.

irremovably rests, it seems strange that, as already stated, it was not till Milton had fought his way through middle life, in state controversies-when old, and blind, and poor, his genius, at length (to accommodate a magnificent figure of his own), "mewing," like "an eagle, her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam" of sacred inspiration-"purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance," soared "with no middle flight above the Aonian mount," while she "pursued, to the height of (her) great argument, things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme," and nobly dared to

> - "assert eternal Providence, And justify the ways of God to men." PARADISE LOST, Book I.

The Latin poems of Milton were, for the most part, the proofs of the early products of his learning, rather than the precocious evidence of his genius. gained him, however, no small reputation, both at home and abroad, among scholars. These, with some maturer fruits of the same hot-house culture, are still reprinted in his collected pieces, but command little attention, except as curiosities of literature. Nor are they much better known, even in the English version, from the kindred pen of Cowper. Like all his poems, they abound in classical allusions and mythological embellishments, which (particularly the latter) are sometimes strangely, not to say profanely, blended with scriptural truths and Christian subjects.

In these juvenile essays, Milton's views of picturesque nature are more general than accurate, and more classical than just: like the ideal of beauty in sculpture, his poetical beauty is equally the offspring of imagination; delighting the eye, indeed, and filling the mind, but seldom touching the heart with the force or reality of truth. A man born blind might, from verbal precedents (in ancient authors especially) have written all the descriptive passages in these compositions.

The earliest original poem in his own tongue, which has been preserved, bears the simple and affecting title —On the Death of a fair Infant, dying of a Cough. She was the daughter of his sister, whom he thus apostrophizes in the first lines:—

"O fairest flower! no sooner blown but blasted! Soft silken primrose, fading timelessly!"

A flower as fair as she, and one that will not fade so timelessly, has the poet planted on her grave, in this affectionate memorial. Though very elaborately wrought after the fashion of a pedantic age, and abounding with forced conceits and cold fancies, these verses give promise of better things, when his genius (he being then in his seventeenth year only) should arrive at maturity, and dare to speak, and write, and think, according to its own free will and choice, unfettered by any precedents of the schools or time-sanctioned authorities.

Our author's next performance (though, like the preceding, more in the style of Donne and Cowley than the genuine vein of John Milton) was a splendid ode On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, in a graceful lyric measure. A recitative of four stanzas forms a fine preamble to the hymn. After proposing his theme, the poet thus earnestly exhorts his Muse to run to Bethlehem and hail the advent of the Redeemer before the wise men from the east could reach "the place where the young child lay."

"See how from far, upon the eastern road,
The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet:
O run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet:
Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet;
And join thy voice unto the angel-quire,
From out his secret altar, touch'd with hallow'd fire."

This Muse was surely his own "Urania" (not one of the fabled Nine), and here she tried her youthful voice in a prelude worthy of that adventurous song of Paradise, when, many a year of after-troubles past, she rose from warbling her humble Christmas-carol, to swell the hallelujahs of heaven, and the hosannas of earth, while she "with angels did divide to sing." The multitude of the heavenly host which appeared to the shepherds in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night, are thus gloriously presented:

"At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,

That with long beams the shame-faced night array'd;
The helmed cherubim,

And sworded seraphim,

Are seen in glittering ranks with wings display'd,
Harping, in loud and solemn quire,

With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born heir.

"Such music, as 'tis said,
Before was never made,
But when of old the sons of morning sung;

While the Creator great His constellations set,

And the well-balanced world on hinges hung, And cast the dark foundations deep,

And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

"Ring out, ye crystal spheres! Once bless our human ears (If ye have power to touch our senses so), And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
And let the base of Heaven's deep organ blow,
And, with your ninefold harmony,
Make up full concert to the angelic symphony."

The sections of this ode, on the portentous tradition that certain heathen oracles were silenced after the birth of Christ, have been universally admired. Recording the terror and consternation of the expelled idols fleeing from their shrines, we have sketches, brief but masterly, of the principal peers of Satan's Pandemonium, which may well be compared with the finished portraits of the same infernal personages in the first and second books of *Paradise Lost*.

A fragment, On the Passion of our Saviour, probably attempted in the same year with the foregoing, shows that the writer had not yet disenthralled himself from the bondage of bad Italian and worse English examples in style. Witness the following stanza:—

"Befriend me, Night! best patroness of grief,
Over the pole thy thickest mantle throw,
And work my flatter'd fancy to belief,
That heaven and earth are colour'd with my woe;
My sorrows are too dark for day to know:
The leaves should all be black whereon I write,
And letters where my tears have wash'd a wannish white."

Were ever tears shed, either in writing or reading such frigid lines as these? If they sprang into the eye, they would freeze before they fell; but, hark!—the next stanza! and you will say, "that strain was of a higher mood."

"See, see the chariot and those rushing wheels, That whirl'd the prophet up that Chebar flood; My spirit some transporting cherub feels;
To bear me where the towers of Salem stood,
—Once glorious towers, now sunk in guiltless blood;
There doth my soul in holy vision sit,
In pensive trance, and anguish, and ecstatic fit!"

In Paradise Lost there is not a flight more well-begun, but here the youthful poet flagged upon the wing, and, to the relique of eight verses, is appended the following affecting note:—"This subject being above the years he had when he wrote it, and nothing satisfied with what was begun, he left it unfinished."

The little poem (twenty-eight lines only), At a Solemn Music, is magnificently conceived, and exquisitely finished throughout. Milton had taken extraordinary pains with this piece, of which there are extant three draughts in his own handwriting, containing seven considerable, and many minor variations, including the excision of no less than ten lines—the chippings and dust of a diamond, in the process of polishing it to perfection! Thus had he early learned the precious "art to blot;" and resolutely he exercised it, proving, by this single example, if he had left no other, that what at first appears excellent, and is so, may be made more excellent by not sparing even darling thoughts and beautiful, when they are rather expletive than essential.

Lycidas is a monody, in which the author bewails the death of a youthful friend, who had been drowned at sea. It is constructed of irregular stanzas, and, though equal in ornate diction and picturesque illustration to anything from the same pen, it is so difficult to read, even with the eye, that it is probably less perused than any other of Milton's masterpieces, though from none are a few peculiar passages more frequently quoted. Who could ever be weary of dwel-

ling, with composure of delight verging on entrancement, on such lines as close this noble rhapsody:—

"Weep no more, woeful shepherds! weep no more, For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead, Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor; So sinks the day-star in the ocean-bed, . And yet anon repairs his drooping head, And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore, Flames in the forehead of the morning sky: -So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high, Through the dear might of Him that walk'd the waves; Where other groves and other streams along, With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves, And hears the unexpressive nuptial song, In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love. There entertain him all the saints above, In solemn troops and sweet societies, That sing, and, singing, in their glory move, And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes."

The contrasted poems of L'Allegro and Il Penseroso, the cheerful and the thoughtful man, are unrivalled in their kind, and as perfect as counterpart descriptions can be of natural scenery, artificial structures, and human feelings, under the influence of seasons and circumstances, abroad and at home, by day and by night, which affect different minds differently, or the same mind differently in different moods, through the medium of the bodily senses. While the landscapes furnish delectable subjects for the pencil of the painter, the images, allegorical as well as real, are so happily fitted for the chisel of the sculptor, that, were it the taste of those who erect stately mansions in our days, to adorn them with "cornice or frieze, with bossy sculpture graven," as temples and palaces were of old, the series of figures and groups in each of these models of diversified excellence would want only

the hand of a Canova or a Chantrey, inspired by the Euphrosyne of the bard himself in the one case, and his "pensive Nun, devout and pure," in the other, to put the poetry of Milton into marble, and give the marble more than life by making it rival the song in endurance as well as in beauty and sublimity. Music, the music of Handel, the Milton of that sister art, which, next to his own, the poet himself loved best, has already been "married to (the) immortal verse" of these harmonious twins. Illustrative of one remarkable feature of our author's genius, a passage from each of these, disclosing his enthusiastic passion for "the concord of sweet sounds," may, in this place, be opportunely quoted, out of numerous allusions to the subject occurring in all his writings. Here are exemplified the different kinds of music, and their respective influences on the merry and the meditative man.

> "And ever against eating cares, Lap me in soft Lydian airs, Married to immortal verse, Such as the meeting soul may pierce, In notes, with many a winding bout Of linked sweetness long drawn out, With wanton heed, and giddy cunning, The melting voice through mazes running, Untwisting all the chains that tie The hidden soul of harmony; That Orpheus' self may heave his head, From golden slumbers on a bed Of heap'd Elysian flowers, and hear Such strains as would have won the ear Of Pluto, to have quite set free His half-regain'd Eurydice."

From L'Allegro.

"Hide me from day's garish eye, While the bee, with honied thigh, That at her flowery work doth sing, And the waters murmuring, With such consort as they keep, Entice the dewy-feather'd sleep, And let some strange, mysterious dream Wave at his wings, in airy stream Of lively portraiture display'd, Softly on my eyelids laid. -And, as I wake, sweet music breathe Above, about, or underneath, Sent by some spirit to mortals good, Or the unseen genius of the wood. But let my due feet never fail To walk the studious cloisters' pale, And love the high-embowered roof, With antique pillars massy proof, And storied windows richly dight, Casting a dim religious light: There, let the pealing organ blow, To the full-voiced quire below, In service high, and anthems clear, As may with sweetness, through mine ear, Dissolve me into ecstacies, And bring all heaven before mine eyes." From IL PENSEROSO.

Which is the sweeter of these two modes of enchantment by the charms of music,—the one involuntarily exhilarating, the other deliciously soothing, yet transporting—it would be difficult to determine. Most readers, who are sensible to such refined emotions as verse like this can communicate, will choose to make the experiment for themselves, and, perhaps, repeat the trial till it shall seem less and less possible to say, whether the awakening or the entrancing strain be most delightful.

Arcades is the title of a brief domestic interlude of song and recitation, performed at Harefield, before

the Countess Dowager of Derby, by some noble persons of her family, who appeared on the scene in pastoral dresses. The speech of "the Genius of the Wood," giving an account of his offices and occupations, is admirably in the character which he assumes.

The first published verses of Milton were an epitaph On the admirable dramatic poet, Shakespeare, commencing thus:—

"What needs my Shakespeare for his honour'd bones, The labour of an age in piled stones? Or, that his hallow'd reliques should be hid Under a star-ypointing pyramid?"

It is remarkable that, while our author was himself meditating "to build the lofty rhyme," and frame a work more stately, and not less enduring than "a star-ypointing pyramid," his minor productions, whereon he exercised and perfected his skill, for that great undertaking, on materials the most precious, and wrought into the most exquisite symmetry, he left strewn about, here and there, for chance publication, without so much as giving his name, when he allowed them to escape into print. Even at the stage of prime manhood, when his Muse, in her haleyon days, had brought forth *Comus*—

"That happy miracle of her rare birth,"

he abandoned it, as the ostrich trusts her young in the wilderness, to be disclosed to the world by his friend, Henry Lawes, who composed the accompanying music, when it was performed with lordly pomp at Ludlow Castle; the principal actors being three children of the noble family of John, Earl of Bridgewater, on whose misadventure, in a neighbouring wood, the romantic fable is founded. In point of fine fancy, rich embellishment, diction of unsurpassable beauty, and high-

toned moral sentiment, this masque may be pronounced the most perfect of Milton's compositions. But to be enjoyed, it must be read as a poem, for the sake of these excellences, and not as a drama representing anything probable or possible in human life, under any imaginable circumstances, even admitting the preternatural machinery which the poet has introduced to exalt a simple incident into tragic dignity. were Comus and his crew, Sabrina and her nymphs, as real as the lady herself,—the elder and the younger brother, but especially the attendant spirit, would not have discoursed so learnedly, nor acted so dilatorily (though each may have felt all that each is made to express), in a crisis of such agonizing suspense and imminent peril to the captured lady, after they knew her situation. With this drawback (if it be one, except in reference to a stage exhibition) Comus may claim the eulogium which a critic of the purest taste, the late Dr. Aikin, has passed upon it. He says:-"The poem possesses great beauty of versification, varying from the gayest Anacreontics to the most majestic and sonorous heroics. On the whole, if an example were required of a work made up of the very essence of poetry, perhaps none of equal length, in any language, could be produced, answering this character in so high a degree as the Masque of Comus." may be added, that here Milton first tried his hand in blank verse, and proved himself master of the whole diapason of rhythmical tones and cadences, through all their implications. Two or three brief extracts, without comment, will test the quality of the philosophy, as well as the poetry, of this work:-

"Virtue could see to do what virtue would, By her own radiant light, though sun and moon Were in the flat sea sunk. And wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
Where, with her best nurse, contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That, in the various bustle of resort,
Were all-to ruffled, and sometimes impaired.
He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.

"How charming is divine philosophy!

Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose;
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

"Against the threats
Of malice, or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call chance, this I hold firm:
Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt;
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthrall'd;
Yea, even that which mischief meant most harm,
Shall, in the happy trial, prove most glory;
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness; when, at last,
Gather'd like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed and self-consumed: if this fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble."

Is not this Plato himself speaking in English, as pure and beautiful, almost, as his own fine Greek?

Our author's Sonnets are of very unequal, and some of very indifferent merit, though the principal fault of the least excellent is the uncouth intertexture of the lines, the ruggedness of the rhythm, and, in some instances, the barbarity of the rhymes. The first is addressed to the nightingale, his favourite bird. Her he has celebrated in every one of his finest poems, and often in strains which, if the chauntress herself could have heard and understood, she would surely, like her sister in Strada's fable, have endeavoured to rival, till she broke her heart in the conflict, and fell dead upon the poet's harp-strings. Among the best of these sonnets, that On the Religious Memory of Mrs. Catherine Thomson is (in the beautiful phrase of Coleridge) "beautiful exceedingly;"—the canonization in verse of a glorified saint. That On the late Massacre in Piedmont contains a tremendous malediction on the persecutors of those mountaineer-martyrs,

"who kept thy truth so pure of old, When all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones."

Nor must the sonnet on his blindness be overlooked. Though severely simple in style, and remarkably abrupt in the cadences, it is, in quiet grandeur of sentiment, one of the noblest records of human feeling at once subdued and sublimed by resignation to the divine will. Milton is never more himself than when he speaks of himself. Here we are let into the inmost sanctuary of his mind, and hearken, as it were, to the invisible spirit there communing with itself, amidst the darkness of external nature, till light from heaven, suddenly breaking in upon him, reveals God in his "kingly state," obeyed equally by those who do and those who suffer his will.

-----"Thousands at his bidding speed, And post o'er land and ocean without rest; They also serve who only stand and wait."

In many of his works, both prose and verse, Milton had avowed his purpose to give, to contemporaries and XXX

generations to come, an heroic poem; but he was "long choosing and beginning late." The delay was of no disadvantage, for the choice which he had almost made, even in middle life, would hardly have proved a wise one. In his Epistle to Manso he expressly names his hero Prince Arthur, and his theme, the triumphs of the British patriot over the pagan Saxons. prosecuted this subject, we should, indeed, have hadwhat is yet a desideratum—a national epic, but the great poem which we have, and of the glory of which time cannot rob us while we are a nation, would verily have been Paradise Lost to our literature, and never to be Regained, for it could never have existed. It was a happy escape for the poet himself, as well as for his country, that his discretion ran not aground on the shoals, nor split on the rocks of the former obscure and dangerous channel, with its alternate shallows, and whirlpools, and fathomless depths, utterly unnavigable by vessels of such burthen as that which bore Milton and his fortunes to the haven of immortality in song. His "heaven-born Muse," which "had angelic wings, and fed on manna," could neither have condescended to the frivolities, nor run riot in the extravagances of romance. He could neither have followed the volatile and fantastic Ariosto, the graceful and voluptuous Tasso, nor the exuberant and imaginative Spenser; though, like Cowley and Pope, he caught early inspiration from the perusal of the Faerie Queene, whose author has, probably, helped to make more poets than any other of our countrymen. Gothic poetry, such as that in which Arthur and his knights of the Round Table require to be celebrated, must resemble Gothic architecture. To magnificence of dimension must be added multiplicity of detail, and to grandeur of outline

efflorescence of embellishment; the minutest appendages to the mightiest proportions, yet the little in nowise diminishing the effect of the great, nor the intricate complexity of parts the august and awful spectacle of the whole. But, after all, the perfection of manual art, the consummation of architectural glory, exemplified in the Parthenon of Athens, was a structure far different:—at once simple in form, in symmetry so exquisite, and so sublime in elevation, that it appeared intellectually grand; and, even through the eye, filling the mind rather than beguiling the sense, with silent, gradual, soul-expanding admiration. The powers of Phidias would have been as uncongenially employed in constructing a cathedral of the twelfth century, as those of Milton on an epic poem from the legends of romance; how rich, abundant, and pliable soever for the purposes of heroic song these might be.

In Paradise Lost Milton has realized the dreams of his youth, the meditations of long years in mature life, while he was far otherwise occupied, and the revelations of his old age, when, "though fallen on evil days and evil tongues"-in darkness, and with dangers compass'd round,-and solitude,"-he yet was visited "nightly" by the "heavenly Muse," or "when morn purpled the east," and was thus emboldened "to celebrate, in glorious and lofty hymns, the throne and equipage of God's almightiness" (to use his own words), "and what He works and what He suffers to be wrought with high providence in the church:"-"teaching over the whole book of sanctity and virtue, through all the instances of example, with such delight to those especially of soft and delicious temper, who will not so much as look on Truth herself, unless she be elegantly drest."

The plan of Paradise Lost is so comprehensive as to include all that can, from obscure allusions in Sacred Writ, be conjectured respecting what came to pass in heaven and in hell before time began,—the creation of all things visible, -man's primeval state of innocence, and his fall from it by disobedience, as revelation has recorded these;—the history of the world, downward from Adam, who lost Paradise, to Christ the Redeemer, who more than restored it, when He "brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel;" with which are involved whatever prophecy had foreshown, or but dimly shadows forth, respecting subsequent revolutions of empire on the face of the globe and among its inhabitants, till the consummation of all things, when "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and (the living) shall be changed."

How he has handled these themes all the world of readers may be presumed to know. How he prepared himself for the task he has left on record, while the project was yet but in embryo .- "I do not think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that, for some few years yet, I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted (an heroic poem), as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine; like that which flows at waste from the the pen of some vulgar amourist, or the trencher-fury of a rhyming parasite; not to be obtained by the invocation of dame Memory and her syren daughters, but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit who can enrich with all knowledge and utterance, and sends out his seraphim, with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, and insight into all

seemly and generous acts and affairs; till which, in some measure, be compassed, at mine own peril and cost, I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loath to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give." With what dignity of modesty are these pledges offered, and with what magnificence of execution were they redeemed!

But to the judgment of each individual, among his readers, it must be left, to determine for himself, how far, in the course of his "adventurous song," the poet's prayer for divine illumination has been answered in the sequel. The theology of the poem, in various passages of the deepest interest, may be seriously questioned. but shall here be left with one remark only (not affecting its doctrinal points), namely, that he would be a bold critic who, as a believer in the Christian faith, should venture to justify the extent to which the author has employed the doubtful, though, hitherto, undisputed license of fiction in the supernatural agency of his poem. At the same time, far be it from the present writer to arraign the poet, either of wilful or negligent impiety. It need not be mooted here, whether he considered himself fully authorized to exercise such perilous freedom, but, assuredly, he was Tasso, Marini, Camoens, and other epic mistaken. poets, have likewise intermeddled with "things that were too high for them," and these have all egregiously miscarried, their spiritual agents having been uniformly the most indifferent, and the least effective personages in their stories. Milton far transcends all his predecessors in the use of such preternatural machinery. while none, that have come after, have been able to approach the power and ability with which he has wielded it. His angels and his demons are of the VOL. T.

highest class of human creation of ideal beings, and there is admirable diversity and consistency of conduct in the exhibition of individuals of either species. But when he "presumes," not only "into the heaven of heavens"—"an earthly guest"—and "draws empyreal air," but into the very presence of Deity, and affects to disclose the "secret things that belong to God" alone, he has failed lamentably, and, in some places, cannot be acquitted of irreverence; for example, in Book V., when the Eternal Father, in the night of the conspiracy, while Satan and his malcontent legions are meditating treason in the north, thus speaks to the Son, whom, on the previous day, he had proclaimed as his anointed king, and commanded all the angels to worship him:—

"Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
In full resplendence, heir of all my might,
Nearly it now concerns us to be sure
Of our omnipotence, and with what arms
We mean to hold what anciently we claim
Of deity or empire: such a foe
Is rising, who intends to erect his throne
Equal to ours, * * * * *
Let us advise, and to this hazard draw
With speed what force is left, and all employ
In our defence, lest unawares we lose
This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill."

The Son replies in a less offensive vein of irony.

Again, in Book X., the Almighty, on occasion of the operations of Sin and Death following the track of Satan from hell gates to the new world, and forming a bridge across the desolate abyss, addresses his Son in language of human passion, too gross to be read without horror, and, therefore, not necessary to be quoted here.

In other discourses between the two divine personages, while there is godlike authority in the speeches

of the Father, and a majesty of meekness, most beautifully characteristic of the Redeemer, in the replies of the Son, it may be allowed to the adventurous poet, that what man could do, he has done; and if even there he fell short of "the height of (his) great argument," he stopped only where

"The force of nature could no further go."

In describing the glories and felicities of heaven, and recording the songs of the angels, he has exceeded, both in splendour and sanctity of thought and utterance, all precedents of forerunners and imitations of successors on similar themes. In Book III., after the long and abtruse colloquy, in the presence of all the hierarchies around the throne, wherein the Father foretells the fall of man, and the Son offers himself as a sacrifice for the sinner, in the scene that follows, Milton transcends himself, and seems only to lack inspiration to stamp authenticity on the record:—

"No sooner had the Almighty ceased, but all The multitude of angels, with a shout, Loud as from numbers without number, sweet As from blest voices, uttering joy, heaven rung With jubilee, and loud hosannas fill'd The eternal regions: lowly reverent Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground, With solemn adoration, down they cast Their crowns, inwove with amarant and gold; Immortal amarant, a flower which once In Paradise, fast by the tree of life, Began to bloom; but soon, for man's offence, To heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows, And flowers aloft, shading the fount of life, And where the river of bliss, through 'midst of heaven, Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream: With these, that never fade, the spirits elect Bind their resplendent locks, inwreathed with beams:

Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone, Impurpled with celestial roses, smiled. Then, crown'd again, their golden harps they took, Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side Like quivers hung, and with preamble sweet Of charming symphony they introduce Their sacred song, and waken raptures high; No voice exempt, no voice but well could join Melodious part, such concord is in heaven. 'Thee, Father,' first they sung, 'Omnipotent, Immutable, Immortal, Infinite, Eternal King,'" &c.

The reader may turn, for himself, to the song. In describing the persons and deeds of angels, Milton has excelled Dante, Tasso, Marini, and other Italian poets, though to each of these he has been indebted for some traits of beauty or grandeur. Uriel, Raphael, Gabriel, Ithuriel, Zephon, Abdiel, and Michael, are each as individual as though they were beings of flesh and blood. With yet stronger features and bolder strokes of the pen, or, rather, of the pencil, has he portrayed "the apostate host." Satan, Moloch, Beelzebub, Chemos, Thammuz, Ashtaroth, Belial, Mammon, and others,—fiends in hell, who were worshipped as gods in Palestine, are each represented to the life, and each distinct in wickedness. Satan alone is complete in all the elements of evil.

One of the wonderful faculties of Milton's mind was the power of finding fit employments for the actors and sufferers in his song, the scenes of which are laid either "beyond this visible diurnal sphere," among spiritual beings, without bodily parts and passions, or with the first human pair in their state of innocence. The various modes in which the fallen angels, during Satan's absence, try to find—"truce to (their) restless

thoughts, and entertain the irksome hours, till (their) great chief return," display singular invention. The following are brief examples:—

"Others, with vast Typhœan rage, more fell,
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind; hell scarce holds the wild uproar:
As when Alcides, from Œchalia, crown'd
With conquest, felt the envenom'd robe, and tore,
Through pain, up by the roots, Thessalian pines,
And Lichas, from the top of Œta, threw
Into the Euboic sea.

Others, more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing,
With notes angelical, to many a harp,
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall
By doom of battle; and complain that fate
Free virtue should enthral to force or chance.
Their song was partial; but the harmony
(What could it less when spirits immortal sing?)
Suspended hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience.

In discourse more sweet (For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense), Others apart sat on a hill retired, In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate, Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute, And found no end, in wandering mazes lost."

The latter groups are exquisitely conceived, and adapted to mitigate the "regions of horror, doleful shades, where hope comes never," hideously yet sublimely set forth in the first quotation, and in the sequel.

The first two books are thick-scattered with grand and affecting similes borrowed from the external world, which have the happy effect of turning the reader's eye, at intervals, from the spectral abominations of hell, and relieving his imagination from horrors heaped upon horrors, during his sojourn with the poet in that obscure and bottomless abyss,—objects which will not bear to be long looked upon in their unmitigated blackness of darkness, or contemplated by the ghastly illumination of that "dungeon," which "on all sides flamed," yet from whose flames "no light, but rather darkness visible—served only to discover sights of woe." Let the curious reader of these two books collect together, and peruse consecutively, all the embellishments of this kind which adorn and illustrate the various topics, and he will be surprised to mark the array of sublime and impressive imagery thus presented.

Of Satan himself it may be affirmed, that Milton's conception of his personal presence, his transcendent intellect, and his moral degradation,-"archangel in eclipse, and the excess of glory obscured,"-"a murderer from the beginning, who abode not in the truth," -"a liar and the father of lies,"-that conception alone as far exceeds every other personification of the Evil One, existent in poetry, tradition, or romance, as "Lucifer, the son of the morning," falling like lightning from heaven," transcends the flickering meteors of the marsh, or the torches that flare and go out in the mephitic atmosphere of a charnel house. On the development of this character throughout the progress of the poem, there is no room to dwell here; one feature only, which has scarcely been noticed, if at all, by former critics, deserves to be pointed out, as the very sign by which he may be infallibly detected when touched by the spear of an Ithuriel,-while it is the very means, in the successful exercise of which he won his usurped dominion on earth, and maintains by it his power to deceive the nations and rule in the hearts of the children of disobedience. The poet, who well knew

his devices, has represented him, in every voluntary act of his policy, taking a false shape, that he might in none be suspected for what he is. From his landing on this orb till he takes flight from it, after the accomplishment of his infernal errand, he does nothing in his own form, or as himself, the foe of God and man. Thus, in Book III., he transforms himself into an angel of light, to impose upon Uriel, the guardian of the sun, -" one of the seven spirits that stand in sight of God's high throne,"-that from him he may learn the way to that new world of which he was in search. Him he effectually deludes by his fair show and fairer words. Alighting on "the mount, north of Eden," from thence he addresses that marvellous speech to the sun, which discloses all the secrets of "the hell within him." During the delivery (by a master-stroke of the poet) he is represented as unconsciously relapsing into himself, under the agony of remorse, despair, and impotent malignity. This betrays him, as "alien from heaven," and "one of the banished crew," to Uriel, whose eye had pursued him, and watched his fiendish gesticulations there. Forthwith "gliding through the evenon a sunbeam—swift as a shooting star in autumn thwarts the night," the seraph speeds to inform Gabriel and the angelic guard of Paradise of the ominous intrusion. The sequel shows the arch-traitor under another and a base disguise,-"squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve, assaying, by his devilish art, to reach the organs of her fancy, and with them forge illusions, as he list, phantasms and dreams." Being caught in this exercise by two of the watch, whom Gabriel had sent in search of him :- "Him, thus intent, Ithuriel with his spear touch'd lightly; for no falsehood can endure touch of celestial temper, but returns of force

to its own likeness: up he starts, discover'd and surprised." The interview that follows between "those two fair angels and the grisly king," and afterwards with Gabriel, to whom they bring him, reluctantly, "o'ercome with rage," and, "like a proud steed rein'd, champing his iron curb,"—is the most spirited and dramatic scene in the poem. It ends, indeed, unsatisfactorily, but could not otherwise have been ended, without marring the catastrophe of the whole.

On his first entrance into Paradise, he assumes the appearance of "a cormorant, perched upon the tree of life," from which he discovers Adam and Eve. Thence he descends among the animals that companied together, and with the human pair who dwelt in the happy garden.

"Nearer to view his prey, and unespied,
To mark what of their state he more might learn,
By word or action mark'd: about them round
A lion now he stalks with fiery glare;
Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
In some purlieu two gentle fawns at play,
Straight couches close, then, rising, changes oft
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
Whence rushing he might surest seize them both,
Griped in each paw."

The aptness of the simile of the tiger, in respect to the two fawns, and Satan meditating the destruction of "Adam, the first of men," and "the first of women, Eve," who are immediately afterwards introduced in conversation, must strike every reader of discernment.

The grand disguise, under which, as a serpent, the Devil beguiles Eve by his subtlety, need not be dwelt upon; the passage is familiar to those with whom Milton is worthily known; the description of his form, his beauty, and his antics, is above all praise. On his return from earth through chaos, he is again seen by his

son and daughter, Sin and Death, in his most imposing disguise, as "an angel bright, betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering his zenith, while the sun in Aries rose." Arriving at home, he, through the midst of his legions assembled in Pandemonium, passes "in show plebeian, as an angel militant of lowest order," till, "from the door of that Plutonian hall, invisible ascending his high throne, * * * * down awhile he sat, and round about him saw, unseen: at last. as from a cloud, his fulgent head and shape starbright appeared, or brighter, clad with what permissive glory since his fall was left him, or false glitter:-all amazed at that so sudden blaze, the Stygian throng bent their aspect, and whom they wish'd beheld, their mighty chief return'd: loud was the acclaim."-But the triumph was brief; and, after all his own successful metamorphoses, an involuntary transformation was suddenly wrought upon him, and not on him only, but on all his peers, when, after he had made an oration setting forth his exploits, "he and his horrid crew" were changed into reptiles of that class which he had chosen for perpetrating his fraud upon Eve. Being met with "a dismal, universal hiss from innumerable tongues on every side," when he expected their plaudits at the close of his speech,

- "he wonder'd, but not long Had leisure, wondering at himself now more; His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare; His arms clung to his ribs; his legs entwining Each other, till, supplanted, down he fell, A monstrous serpent on his belly prone, Reluctant, but in vain;—a greater Power Now ruled him, punish'd in the shape he sinn'd, According to his doom; he would have spoke, But hiss for hiss return'd with fork'd tongue VOL. I.

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To forked tongue; for now were all transform'd Alike, to serpents all, as accessories To his bold riot."—Paradise Lost, Book X.

Of the human actors, or, rather, sufferers, throughout this poem, the war in heaven, the creation of the world, and the prophetic disclosures with which it closes, analysis or exposition would be vain in this place. The first appearance of Adam and Eve, in Book IV., is a vision of beauty, unequalled in poetry. Their innocent endearments, their conjugal affection, their sweet and delicate discourse, their pastimes, their labours, their devotions, are all conceived and expressed with consummate ability. In the first pair Milton has delineated the ideal, which he fondly cherished, but never realised, of "wedded love." "Here Love his golden shafts employs; here lights his constant lamp, and waves his purple wings; reigns here and revels." In all this author's poems there are no love-verses, addressed either to a living or an imaginary mistress-no Beatrice, no Laura, no Leonora.-In some of his school-boy elegiacs, in Latin, there are allusions to a tender passion, and a very ornate dream of a lady whom he saw in sleep, and sought, in vain, through the world afterwards, but it was manifestly head-work; there is not a trace of heart-love there, or elsewhere, except in the sonnet on his "late deceased saint," his second wife, formerly noticed. And yet no man of woman born has more glorified woman, in prose or rhyme, than he has done in Paradise Lost, in Comus, and even in his Treatise on Divorce.

Against one insuperable difficulty Milton had to wrestle, all the way through his subject, in *Paradise Lost*;—the inexplicable and inextricable confusion continually recurring between the properties of matter

and spirit in his preternatural agency. Dante before him had bravely encountered this perplexity; and, though not in one instance has he succeeded in disentangling the knot, yet it neither fettered nor hindered him from pursuing his resolute course through a Hell, a Purgatory, and a Heaven, of his own creation, in which impossibilities on earth were the events of every day in his new universe. Milton, in the battle of angels especially, has achieved prodigies of invention, and his triumph, though far from being complete, sufficiently proves that he came short only from the absolute impracticability of any attempt to symbolize eternal realities by temporal things. The close of the conflict, by the interposition of the Messiah, is, beyond comparison, great as the record of what might have might have been, in such a case:- "So spake the Son, and into terror changed his countenance, too severe to be beheld," to the end of Raphael's narrative. The whole power of the poet's mind, and the whole strength of the English language, are here summoned to describe the one act of the conqueror, routing, expelling, and pursuing the enemy, till, from the precipice into the infernal gulf,

——— "headlong themselves they threw, Down from the verge of heaven; eternal wrath Burnt after them to the bottomless pit."

PARADISE LOST, Book VI.

Much criticism has been expended to prove that the allegorical parts of this poem are faults which no law of epic poetry can absolve. But not one of the censors has ventured to demand that execution should be done upon "Sin and Death," "Chaos and ancient Night," nor even the phantasms that people "the Limbo of Vanity." Offences if these be, what poet would not wish to have committed them; or would not go and do likewise, if he could, at his peril?

The burthen of Paradise Regained is our Saviour's temptation by the devil in the wilderness. This production has been unworthily disparaged; a sober judgment will, probably, pronounce it inferior to its predecessor only in proportion as the action, passion, and moral of the subject are necessarily inferior. Our Lord's obedience, in that hour and power of darkness, was but one step in his suffering life, and towards his atoning death, by which, at his glorious resurrection and ascension, "he opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers."

The following extracts from this neglected poem will sufficiently show, that where the theme admitted of noble expressions, there was no falling-off of genius in the author to give utterance to such. The tempter plays his part, with consummate address, under the various disguises which he assumes. Through all of these, however, Jesus discerns him, and defeats his devices; confuting his arguments, and confounding his sophistries, though both are set forth with all the splendour of eloquence, and the subtlety of perverted logic; while the Redeemer's replies are in the plainest language that human invention could put into the mouth of Him, of whom it was said, "never man spake like this man." The narrative and descriptive portions of the work are of the richest materials and the rarest workmanship.

When Satan, from "the specular mount," is showing to our Saviour all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory, the discovery of the Parthian armies in motion affords a magnificent spectacle:—

"' Now the Parthian king
In Ctesiphon, hath gather'd all his host
Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild
Have wasted Sogdiana; to her aid
He marches now in haste: see, though from far,
His thousands, in what martial equipage
They issue forth, steel bows and shafts their arms,
Of equal dread in flight or in pursuit;
All horsemen, in which fight they most excel;
See how in warlike muster they appear,
In rhombs, and wedges, and half-moons, and wings.'

He look'd, and saw what numbers numberless The city gates out-pour'd, light-armed troops In coats of mail and military pride; In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong, Prancing their riders bore, the flower and choice Of many provinces from bound to bound.

He saw them in their forms of battle ranged,
How quick they wheel'd, and, flying, behind them shot
Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face
Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight;
The field all iron cast a gleaming brown:
Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor, on each horn,
Cuirassiers, all in steel for standing fight,
Chariots, or elephants indorsed with towers
Of archers; nor of labouring pioneers
A multitude with spades and axes arm'd,
To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
Or, where plain was, raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke;
Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,
And wagons fraught with utensils of war."

Our mighty poet here marshals the words of the English language like disciplined troops, and makes them move, advance, shift, and perform all the feats and manœuvres which, in this marvellous paragraph, he represents the Parthian armies as performing. So perfectly do the sounds, the turns, and the pauses of the verse, though addressed to the ear, convey to the eye the images which they are intended to depict.

The greater part of Book IV. is equal to anything corresponding with the subjects in the former poem. The vision of Athens excels in beauty and splendour all that her own poets, historians, and orators have said in her praise. But another scene will be as seasonable here, to exhibit the undiminished talents of the author of *Paradise Lost* in *Paradise Regained*.

And either tropic now 'Gan thunder, and both ends of heaven; the clouds, From many a horrid rift, abortive pour'd Fierce rain with lightning mix'd, water with fire In ruin reconciled: nor slept the winds Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad From the four hinges of the world, and fell On the vex'd wilderness, whose tallest pines, Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks, Bow'd their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts, Or torn up sheer.

Ill wast thou shrouded then, O patient Son of God! yet only stood'st Unshaken! Nor yet staid the terror there; Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round Environ'd thee; some howl'd, some yell'd, some shriek'd, Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou Sat'st unappall'd in calm and sinless peace. Thus pass'd the night so foul, till morning fair Came forth with pilgrim steps, in amice grey; Who, with her radiant finger, still'd the roar Of thunder, chased the clouds, and laid the winds, And grisly spectres, which the fiend had raised To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire. And now the sun, with more effectual beams. Had cheer'd the face of earth, and dried the wet From drooping plant, or dropping tree; the birds, Who all things now behold more fresh and green, After a night of storm so ruinous, Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray. To gratulate the sweet return of morn."

The exquisitely touching apostrophe-

"Ill wast thou shrouded then, O patient Son of God!"

offers an example of the most delicate skill, in turning the description of the horrible effects of the storm into a realization of it to the reader himself, who feels as though he were standing by the poet, looking on and listening, while the latter repeats, in tones of tenderest sympathy, to the divine sufferer, the hideous phenomena as they occur in succession, to "scare him with visions, and terrify him through dreams," as Job, the type of our tempted Redeemer, describes himself to be haunted withal. Then, what can be more sweet, reviving, and delicious than the breath, the brightness, and the beauty of the "morning fair," who, with the single motion of "her radiant finger," stills the storm, dispels the gloom, chases the clouds, and lays the winds and grisly spectres which the fiend had raised; while the birds,-

"Who all things now behold more fresh and green," burst into songs of joy, "to gratulate the sweet return of morn?"

Similar scenes and contrasts have often been painted by poets of every age and country, but a night more hideous, followed by a morn more levely, never yet appeared in nature or in song.

Samson Agonistes, a tragedy, most elaborately composed, and on the severest Greek model, is uninviting both in its theme and the treatment of it; yet the dialogues abound with sublime and pious sentiments; while, though much of the versification is harsh, and scarcely reducible to metre, the diction throughout exemplifies the full strength and affluence of the English language.

Satan's address to the sun, in Book IV. of Paradise Lost, is, deservedly, one of the most admired passages in that poem. There the arch-fiend, broken loose from hell, emerging from chaos, and, for the first time, beholding the new-created light of another world, is thereby miserably reminded of the high estate from which he had been cast down by "pride and worse In the opening of Milton's tragedy, ambition." Samson is brought out of the dungeon, and laid down upon a sunny bank, to enjoy the warmth of the day, and the freshness of the breeze. By the way, he speaks first to his attendant, and then to himself, of his departed glory, his ignominious bondage, and his lamentable blindness. Satan and Samson thus present two most striking spectacles of angel and man, fallen, by transgression, from the loftiest eminence which either could occupy, the one in heaven, the other on earth. The contrast is awful and affecting. The fiend, racked with doubt and horror, on the threshold of his

new attempt to cope with the Almighty, not in the open battle-field, by violence, but covertly, by fraud; that fiend, carrying the hell that stirs within himself into the bosom of Paradise, looks up to the sun with rage and agony, and calls him by his name, to tell him how he "hates his beams," and recoils from his splendour as that which most annoys his sense of guilt, and aggravates his fixed despair. The Hebrew champion, on the other hand, blind and bound, and captive to the Philistines, having a breathing-space from prisonlabour, and equally reflecting on lost bliss, present pain, and future hopelessness, stretches out his fettered arms, lifts up his face, as the blind are wont to do, towards the light, and longs to see and bless the sun, and tell him how he loves his beams. The "archangel in eclipse" is scarcely a more magnificent being than Samson, the ruin of himself, thus cast upon the earth, and bewailing his miserable thraldom, but chiefly his loss of sight.

To contrast these two addresses of Satan and Samson with each other, and then to compare both with the poet's most touching lamentation over his own bereavement, in the opening of Book III. of *Paradise Lost*, will prove a deeply interesting exercise of taste, sympathy, and nice discernment, to the sensitive and intelligent reader, who will be filled with admiration at the wealth and diversity of talent unconsciously displayed by the author on three several occasions, at once so like, and so unlike each other. A parallel example of inexhaustible resources on so trite and confined a subject, it would be difficult to quote from any other authority.

The plot of this tragedy is so artless in form and development, that it scarcely can be said to have any

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plot at all. Samson, as he thus sits on the sunny bank, bemoaning himself, is visited in succession by a chorus of Israelites; his father, Manoah; Harapha, a giant, ancestor of Goliath, in a later age; and by Dalilah, his betraying wife. With each of these he holds spirited, though lengthy discourse. In the sequel, being sent for by the Philistine lords, on occasion of a high festival, to make them sport, in the temple of Dagon, their idol, he gratifies them with practical proofs of his prodigious strength. During a pause, he is permitted to "lean awhile on those two massy pillars, that to the arched roof gave main support;" which, when Samson "felt in his arms, with head awhile inclined, and eyes fast fixed, he stood as one who prayed, or some great matter in his mind revolved: at last, with head erect, thus cried aloud:-

'Hitherto, lords, what your commands imposed. I have perform'd, as reason was, obeying, Not without wonder or delight beheld:

Now, of my own accord, such other trial
I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater,
As with amaze shall strike all who behold.'"

Then follows the stupendous catastrophe, which is thus related:—

"This utter'd, straining all his nerves, he bow'd:
As with the force of winds and waters pent,
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
With horrible convulsion to and fro
He tugg'd, he shook, till down they came, and drew
The whole roof after them with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
Lords, ladies, captains, councillors, or priests,
Their choice nobility and flower, not only
Of this, but each Philistian city round,

Met from all parts to solemnize this feast. Samson, with these immix'd, inevitably Pull'd down the same destruction on himself; The vulgar only 'scaped who stood without.''

In conclusion, the characteristics of Milton's poetry shall here be summed up in words which were published, anonymously, by the present writer, more than thirty years ago, in a literary journal: "So much has been said of Milton and his genius, by critics of all manner of tastes and qualifications, principles and prejudices, that little need be added here. His merits have been irreversibly established by every test of sound judgment to assay and illustrate them, as well as by every ordeal which envy, hatred, or bigotry could invent to obscure or depreciate them. His genius was of the loftiest order, and qualified rather to command than to court admiration. The admiration, therefore, which it has obtained is rendered with less fervour than reverence, and more as homage to a sovereign than as gratitude to a benefactor. The sublimity of his invention overawed the Graces, and the severity of his taste made fiction itself as inflexible as truth. Comus, the most brilliant, ethereal, and delightful of all his compositions, there is a dignity in the graver, and a chastened gaiety in the lighter scenes, as coldly dissimilar from the bewitching freedom and familiarity of Shakspeare in the Midsummer Night's Dream, as Sabrina and her Water Nymphs are elementally distinct from Queen Titania and her Fairies. Milton's supreme dominion lay over the mind and the imagination, and over both (in his poetry, but not in his prose) it was exercised with a moderation as marvellous as its force. When he has been displaying powers that might be deemed almost preternatural, he appears

so unexhausted and vigorous, that we are ready, in applauding the triumph, to exclaim, in his own words—

'Yet half his strength he put not forth.'

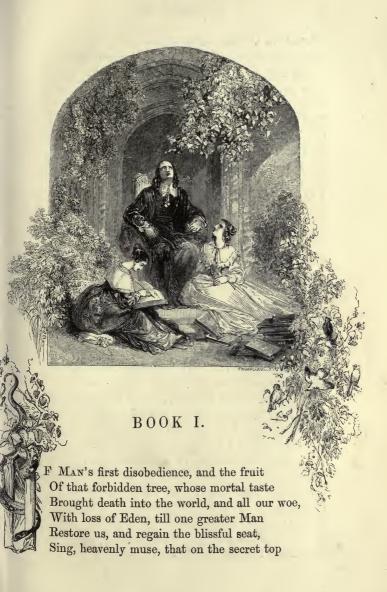
"Over the gentler passions he either had little authority, or he disdained to use it. The reconciliation of Adam and Eve, after the scene of bitter recrimination on the one part, and the most humbling confession of having unwittingly offended on the other, is, perhaps, the only passage in all his writings that can move tears; the penitence of Eve is, indeed, irresistibly pathetic. The chief excellence of his poetry is surpassing elevation of thought, sustained by unfailing strength of language: its chief defect is the absence of a charm neither to be named nor defined, which should render the whole as lovely as it is beautiful, and as captivating as it is sublime. * * His Muse has the majesty of Juno to dazzle the eye, the wisdom of Minerva to inform the understanding, but she wants the girdle of Venus to bind the affections. His poetry will be for ever read by the few, and praised by the many. The weakest capacity may be offended by its faults, but it would require a genius scarcely inferior to his own, to comprehend, enjoy, and unfold all its merits."

PARADISE LOST.

BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

The First Book proposes, first, in brief, the whole subject, Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed: then touches the prime cause of his fall—the serpent, or, rather, Satan in the serpent; who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of angels, was, by the command of God, driven out of heaven, with all his crew, into the great deep. Which action passed over, the Poem hastens into the midst of things, presenting Satan, with his angels, now fallen into hell, described here, not in the centre (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed), but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos: here Satan, with his angels, lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him: they confer of their miserable fall: Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise; their numbers; array of battle; their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterward in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these, Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining heaven, but tells them, lastly, of a new world, and a new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy, or report, in heaven; for that angels were, long before this visible creation, was the opinion of many ancient fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the deep: the infernal peers there sit in council.



Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed, In the beginning, how the heavens and earth Rose out of chaos: or, if Sion's hill Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flow'd Fast by the oracle of God; I thence Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song, That with no middle flight intends to soar Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme. And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer Before all temples the upright heart and pure. Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread, Dove-like, sat'st brooding on the vast abyss, And madest it pregnant: what in me is dark, Illumine; what is low, raise and support; That to the height of this great argument I may assert eternal Providence, And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first, for heaven hides nothing from thy view, Nor the deep tract of hell; say first, what cause Moved our grand parents, in that happy state, Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off From their Creator, and transgress his will, For one restraint, lords of the world besides? Who first seduced them to that foul revolt? The infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile, Stirr'd up with envy and revenge, deceived The mother of mankind; what time his pride Had cast him out from heaven, with all his host Of rebel angels; by whose aid, aspiring To set himself in glory above his peers, He trusted to have equall'd the Most High,

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If he opposed; and, with ambitious aim Against the throne and monarchy of God, Raised impious war in heaven, and battle proud, With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power Hurl'd headlong flaming from the ethereal sky, With hideous ruin and combustion, down To bottomless perdition; there to dwell In adamantine chains and penal fire, Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.



Nine times the space that measures day and night To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew. Lay vanquish'd, rolling in the fiery gulf, Confounded, though immortal: but his doom Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought Both of lost happiness and lasting pain Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes, That witness'd huge affliction and dismay, Mix'd with obdurate pride, and steadfast hate. At once, as far as angels' ken, he views The dismal situation waste and wild: A dungeon horrible, on all sides round, As one great furnace, flamed; yet from those flames No light; but rather darkness visible Served only to discover sights of woe, Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace And rest can never dwell; hope never comes That comes to all: but torture without end Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed: Such place Eternal Justice had prepared For those rebellious; here their prison ordain'd In utter darkness, and their portion set, As far removed from God and light of heaven, As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole. O, how unlike the place from whence they fell! There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelm'd With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire, He soon discerns; and weltering by his side One next himself in power, and next in crime, Long after known in Palestine, and named Beëlzebub. To whom the arch-enemy, And thence in heaven call'd Satan, with bold words Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:-

"If thou beest he; but O, how fall'n! how changed From him, who, in the happy realms of light, Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine Myriads, though bright! If he, whom mutual league, United thoughts and counsels, equal hope And hazard in the glorious enterprise, Join'd with me once, now misery hath join'd In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest From what height fall'n, so much the stronger proved He with his thunder: and till then who knew The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those, Nor what the potent Victor in his rage Can else inflict, do I repent or change, Though changed in outward lustre, that fix'd mind, And high disdain from sense of injured merit, That with the Mightiest raised me to contend, And to the fierce contention brought along Innumerable force of spirits arm'd, That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring, His utmost power with adverse power opposed In dubious battle on the plains of heaven, And shook his throne. What though the field be lost? All is not lost; the unconquerable will, And study of revenge, immortal hate, And courage never to submit or yield, And what is else not to be overcome; That glory never shall his wrath or might Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace With suppliant knee, and deify his power Who, from the terror of this arm, so late Doubted his empire; that were low indeed, That were an ignominy, and shame beneath This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of gods, And this empyreal substance, cannot fail:

Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand foe,
Who now triumphs, and, in the excess of joy
Sole reigning, holds the tyranny of heaven."
So spake the apostate angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but rack'd with deep despair;
And him thus answer'd soon his bold compeer:—

"O prince, O chief of many-throned powers, That led the embattled seraphim to war Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds Fearless, endanger'd heaven's perpetual King, And put to proof his high supremacy, Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate; Too well I see, and rue the dire event, That with sad overthrow, and foul defeat, Hath lost us heaven, and all this mighty host In horrible destruction laid thus low, As far as gods and heavenly essences Can perish: for the mind and spirit remain Invincible, and vigour soon returns, Though all our glory extinct, and happy state Here swallow'd up in endless misery. But what if he, our Conqueror, (whom I now, Of force, believe Almighty, since no less Than such could have o'erpower'd such force as ours) Have left us this our spirit and strength entire, Strongly to suffer and support our pains, That we may so suffice his vengeful ire, Or do him mightier service as his thralls By right of war, whate'er his business be, Here in the heart of hell to work in fire,

Or do his errands in the gloomy deep?
What can it then avail, though yet we feel
Strength undiminish'd, or eternal being,
To undergo eternal punishment?"
Whereto with speedy words the arch-fiend replied:—

"Fall'n cherub, to be weak is miserable, Doing or suffering; but of this be sure, To do aught good never will be our task, But ever to do ill our sole delight, As being the contrary to his high will Whom we resist. If then his providence Out of our evil seek to bring forth good, Our labour must be to pervert that end, And out of good still to find means of evil, Which ofttimes may succeed, so as, perhaps, Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb His inmost counsels from their destined aim. But see, the angry Victor hath recall'd His ministers of vengeance and pursuit Back to the gates of heaven; the sulphurous hail, Shot after us in storm, o'erblown, hath laid The fiery surge, that from the precipice Of heaven received us falling; and the thunder, Wing'd with red lightning and impetuous rage, Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now To bellow through the vast and boundless deep. Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn Or satiate fury yield it from our foe. Seest thou you dreary plain, forlorn and wild, The seat of desolation, void of light, Save what the glimmering of these livid flames Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend From off the tossing of these fiery waves; There rest, if any rest can harbour there;

And, re-assembling our afflicted powers, Consult how we may henceforth most offend Our enemy; our own loss how repair; How overcome this dire calamity; What reinforcement we may gain from hope; If not, what resolution from despair."

Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate, With head uplift above the wave, and eyes That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides, Prone on the flood, extended long and large, Lay floating many a rood; in bulk as huge As whom the fables name, of monstrous size, Titanian, or Earth-born, that warr'd on Jove: Briareus, or Typhon, whom the den By ancient Tarsus held; or that sea-beast Leviathan, which God of all his works Created hugest that swim the ocean stream: Him, haply, slumbering on the Norway foam, The pilot of some small night-founder'd skiff, Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell, With fixed anchor in his scaly rind, Moors by his side under the lee, while night Invests the sea, and wished morn delays: So stretch'd out huge in length the arch-fiend lay, Chain'd on the burning lake: nor ever thence Had risen, or heaved his head; but that the will And high permission of all-ruling Heaven Left him at large to his own dark designs; That with reiterated crimes he might Heap on himself damnation, while he sought Evil to others; and, enraged, might see How all his malice served but to bring forth Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shewn On man by him seduced; but on himself

Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance pour'd. Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool His mighty stature; on each hand the flames, Driven backward, slope their pointing spires, and roll'd In billows, leave in the midst a horrid vale. Then with expanded wings he steers his flight Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air, That felt unusual weight; till on dry land He lights, if it were land that ever burn'd With solid, as the lake with liquid fire; And such appear'd in hue, as when the force Of subterranean wind transports a hill Torn from Pelorus, or the shatter'd side Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible And fuel'd entrails thence conceiving fire, Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds, And leave a singed bottom, all involved With stench and smoke: such resting found the sole Of unblest feet. Him follow'd his next mate: Both glorying to have 'scaped the Stygian flood, As gods, and by their own recover'd strength, Not by the sufferance of supernal power.

"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime?"
Said then the lost archangel;—"this the seat
That we must change for heaven?—this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he,
Who now is Sovereign, can dispose and bid
What shall be right: farthest from him is best,
Whom reason hath equall'd, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessor; one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time:

The mind is its own place, and in itself Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven. What matter where, if I be still the same. And what I should be; all but less than he Whom thunder hath made greater? Here, at least, We shall be free: the Almighty hath not built Here for his envy, will not drive us hence: Here we may reign secure, and, in my choice, To reign is worth ambition, though in hell; Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven. But wherefore let we then our faithful friends, The associates and co-partners of our loss, Lie thus astonish'd on the oblivious pool, And call them not to share with us their part In this unhappy mansion; or once more With rallied arms to try what may be yet Regain'd in heaven, or what more lost in hell?"

So Satan spake, and him Beëlzebub
Thus answer'd:—"Leader of those armies bright,
Which, but the Omnipotent, none could have foil'd!
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battle when it raged, in all assaults
Their surest signal, they will soon resume
New courage and revive; though now they lie
Grovelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,
As we erewhile, astounded and amazed;
No wonder, fallen such a pernicious height."

He scarce had ceased, when the superior fiend Was moving toward the shore: his ponderous shield, Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round, Behind him cast; the broad circumference Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb

Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views, At evening, from the top of Fesolé, Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands, Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe. His spear, to equal which the tallest pine Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast Of some great ammiral, were but a wand, He walk'd with, to support uneasy steps Over the burning marle, not like those steps On heaven's azure, and the torrid clime Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire: Nathless he so endured, till on the beach Of that inflamed sea he stood, and call'd His legions, angel forms, who lay entranced, Thick as autumnal leaves, that strew the brooks In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades, High over-arch'd, imbower; or scatter'd sedge Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion arm'd Hath vex'd the Red Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew Busiris and his Memphian chivalry, While, with perfidious hatred, they pursued The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld From the safe shore their floating carcasses And broken chariot-wheels; so thick bestrewn, Abject and lost lay these, covering the flood, Under amazement of their hideous change. He call'd so loud, that all the hollow deep Of hell resounded! "Princes, potentates, Warriors, the flower of heaven, once yours, now lost, If such astonishment as this can seize Eternal spirits; or have ye chosen this place After the toil of battle to repose Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find To slumber here, as in the vales of heaven?

Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the Conqueror? who now beholds
Cherub and seraph rolling in the flood
With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from heaven-gates discern
The advantage, and, descending, tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?
Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n!"

They heard, and were abash'd, and up they sprung Upon the wing; as when men, wont to watch On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread, Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake. Nor did they not perceive the evil plight In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel; Yet to their general's voice they soon obey'd, Innumerable. As when the potent rod Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day, Waved round the coast, up call'd a pitchy cloud Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind, That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile: So numberless were those bad angels seen Hovering on wing under the cope of hell, 'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires; Till at a signal given, the uplifted spear Of their great sultan waving to direct Their course, in even balance down they light On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain: A multitude like which the populous north Pour'd never from her frozen loins, to pass Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons Came like a deluge on the south, and spread Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.



Forthwith from every squadron and each band The heads and leaders thither haste, where stood Their great commander; godlike shapes and forms Excelling human, princely dignities; And powers that erst in heaven sat on thrones, Though of their names in heavenly records now Be no memorial; blotted out and rased By their rebellion from the book of life.

Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve Got them new names; till, wandering o'er the earth, Through God's high sufferance, for the trial of man, By falsities and lies the greatest part Of mankind they corrupted to forsake God their Creator, and the invisible Glory of him that made them, to transform Oft to the image of a brute, adorn'd With gay religions, full of pomp and gold, And devils to adore for deities:

Then were they known to men by various names, And various idols through the heathen world.

Say, muse, their names then known, who first, who last, Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch, At their great emperor's call, as next in worth, Came singly where he stood on the bare strand, While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof. The chief were those who, from the pit of hell, Roaming to seek their prey on earth, durst fix Their seats, long after, next the seat of God, Their altars by his altar; gods adored Among the nations round; and durst abide Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned Between the cherubin; yea, often placed Within his sanctuary itself their shrines, Abominations; and with cursed things His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned, And with their darkness durst affront his light. First, Moloch, horrid king, besmear'd with blood Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears; Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud, Their children's cries unheard, that pass through fire To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite Worshipp'd in Rabba and her watery plain,

In Argob and in Basan, to the stream Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart Of Solomon he led by fraud to build His temple right against the temple of God, On that opprobrious hill; and made his grove The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence And black Gehenna call'd, the type of hell. Next, Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons, From Aroer to Nebo, and the wild Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon And Horonáim, Seon's realm, beyond The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines, And Eleälé to the asphaltic pool. Peor his other name, when he enticed Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile. To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe. Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove Of Moloch homicide; lust hard by hate; Till good Josiah drove them thence to hell. With these came they, who, from the bordering flood Of old Euphrates, to the brook that parts Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names Of Baälim and Ashtaroth; those male, These feminine; for spirits, when they please, Can either sex assume, or both; so soft And uncompounded is their essence pure; Not tied or manacled with joint or limb, Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones, Like cumbrous flesh; but in what shape they choose, Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure. Can execute their aëry purposes, And works of love or enmity fulfil. VOL. I.

For those the race of Israel oft forsook Their living strength, and unfrequented left His righteous altar, bowing lowly down To bestial gods; for which their heads as low Bow'd down in battle, sunk before the spear Of despicable foes. With these, in troop, Came Astoreth, whom the Phænicians call'd Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns; To whose bright image nightly, by the moon, Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs; In Sion, also, not unsung, where stood Her temple on the offensive mountain, built By that uxorious king, whose heart, though large, Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell To idols foul. Thammuz came next behind. Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured The Syrian damsels to lament his fate In amorous ditties all a summer's day; While smooth Adonis from his native rock Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale Infected Sion's daughters with like heat; Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led, His eye survey'd the dark idolatries Of alienated Judah. Next came one Who mourn'd in earnest, when the captive ark Maim'd his brute image, head and hands lopp'd off In his own temple, on the grunsel edge, Where he fell flat, and shamed his worshippers: Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man And downward fish; yet had his temple high Rear'd in Azotus, dreaded through the coast Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon,

And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds. Him followed Rimmon, whose delightful seat Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams. He also 'gainst the house of God was bold: A leper once he lost, and gain'd a king; Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew God's altar to disparage and displace For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn His odious offerings, and adore the gods Whom he had vanquish'd. After these appear'd A crew who, under names of old renown, Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train, With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused Fanatic Egypt and her priests, to seek Their wandering gods disguised in brutish forms Rather than human. Nor did Israel 'scape The infection, when their borrow'd gold composed The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan, Likening his Maker to the grazed ox-Jehovah, who, in one night, when he pass'd From Egypt marching, equall'd, with one stroke, Both her first-born and all her bleating gods. Belial came last, than whom a spirit more lewd Fell not from heaven, or more gross to love Vice for itself: to him no temple stood, Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he In temples and at altars, when the priest Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who fill'd With lust and violence the house of God? In courts and palaces he also reigns. And in luxurious cities, where the noise Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,

And injury and outrage: and when night Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine. Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night In Gibeah, when the hospitable door Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape. These were the prime in order and in might; The rest were long to tell, though far renown'd, The Ionian gods, of Javan's issue, held Gods, yet confess'd later than heaven and earth, Their boasted parents: Titan, heaven's first-born, With his enormous brood, and birthright seized By younger Saturn; he, from mightier Jove, His own and Rhea's son, like measure found; So Jove usurping reign'd: these first in Crete And Ida known, thence on the snowy top Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air, Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian cliff, Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields, And o'er the Celtic roam'd the utmost isles.

All these and more came flocking; but with looks Downcast and damp; yet such wherein appear'd Obscure some glimpse of joy, to have found their chief Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost In loss itself: which on his countenance cast Like doubtful hue: but he his wonted pride Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised Their fainting courage, and dispell'd their fears. Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound Of trumpets loud and clarions, be uprear'd His mighty standard: that proud honour claim'd

Azazel as his right, a cherub tall; Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurl'd The imperial ensign; which, full high advanced, Shone like a meteor, streaming to the wind, With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed, Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds: At which the universal host up-sent A shout, that tore hell's concave, and beyond Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night. All in a moment, through the gloom, were seen Ten thousand banners rise into the air. With orient colours waving: with them rose A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms Appear'd, and serried shields in thick array Of depth immeasurable: anon they move In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood Of flutes and soft recorders: such as raised To height of noblest temper heroes old Arming to battle; and, instead of rage, Deliberate valour breathed, firm and unmoved With dread of death to flight or foul retreat: Nor wanting power to mitigate and 'suage, With solemn touches, troubled thoughts, and chase Anguish, and doubt, and fear, and sorrow, and pain, From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they. Breathing united force, with fixed thought, Moved on in silence, to soft pipes that charm'd Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil: and now Advanced in view they stand; a horrid front Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise Of warriors old, with order'd spear and shield! Awaiting what command their mighty chief Had to impose: he through the armed files

Darts his experienced eye, and soon travérse The whole battalion views, their order due, Their visages and stature as of gods; Their number last he sums. And now his heart Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength, Glories: for never since created man Met such embodied force as, named with these, Could merit more than that small infantry Warr'd on by cranes: though all the giant brood Of Phlegra with the heroic race were join'd That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side Mix'd with auxiliar gods; and what resounds In fable or romance of Uther's son, Begirt with British and Armoric knights; And all who since, baptized or infidel, Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban, Damasco, or Morocco, or Trebisond, Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore, When Charlemain, with all his peerage, fell By Fontarabia. Thus far these beyond Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed Their dread commander; he, above the rest In shape and gesture proudly eminent, Stood like a tower; his form had yet not lost All its original brightness: nor appear'd Less than archangel ruin'd, and the excess Of glory obscured: as when the sun, new risen, Looks through the horizontal misty air Shorn of his beams; or, from behind the moon, In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds On half the nations, and with fear of change Perplexes monarchs. Darken'd so, yet shone Above them all the archangel: but his face Deep scars of thunder had intrench'd; and care

Sat on his faded cheek; but under brows Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride Waiting revenge; cruel his eye, but cast Signs of remorse and passion, to behold The fellows of his crime, the followers rather (Far other once beheld in bliss), condemn'd For ever now to have their lot in pain: Millions of spirits for his fault amerced Of heaven, and from eternal splendours flung For his revolt; yet faithful how they stood, Their glory wither'd: as when heaven's fire Hath scathed the forest oaks, or mountain pines, With singed top, their stately growth, though bare, Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared To speak: whereat their double ranks they bend From wing to wing, and half enclose him round With all his peers: attention held them mute. Thrice he assay'd, and thrice, in spite of scorn, Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth: at last Words, interwove with sighs, found out their way.

"O myriads of immortal spirits! O powers
Matchless, but with the Almighty; and that strife
Was not inglorious, though the event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change,
Hateful to utter! but what power of mind,
Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge, past or present, could have fear'd,
How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these could ever know repulse?
For who can yet believe, though after loss,
That all these puissant legions, whose exile
Hath emptied heaven, shall fail to re-ascend,
Self-raised, and re-possess their native seat?
For me, be witness all the host of heaven,

If counsels different, or dangers shunn'd By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns Monarch in heaven, till then as one secure Sat on his throne upheld by old repute, Consent or custom; and his regal state Put forth at full, but still his strength conceal'd, Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall. Henceforth his might we know, and know our own, So as not either to provoke, or dread New war, provoked; our better part remains To work in close design, by fraud or guile, What force effected not: that he no less At length from us may find, who overcomes By force, hath overcome but half his foe. Space may produce new worlds: whereof so rife There went a fame in heaven that he, ere long, Intended to create, and therein plant A generation, whom his choice regard Should favour equal to the sons of heaven: Thither, if but to pry, shall be, perhaps, Our first eruption; thither, or elsewhere; For this infernal pit shall never hold Celestial spirits in bondage, nor the abyss Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts Full counsel must mature: peace is despair'd; For who can think submission? War, then, war, Open or understood, must be resolved."

He spake; and, to confirm his words, out-flew Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs Of mighty cherubim; the sudden blaze Far round illumined hell; highly they raged Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms Clash'd on their sounding shields the din of war, Hurling defiance toward the vault of heaven.



There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top
Belch'd fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
Shone with a glossy scurf; undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
The work of sulphur. Thither, wing'd with speed,
A numerous brigade hasten'd: as when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe arm'd,
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,

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Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on: Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell From heaven; for e'en in heaven his looks and thoughts Were always downward bent, admiring more The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold, Than aught, divine or holy, else enjoy'd In vision beatific: by him first Men, also, and by his suggestion taught, Ransack'd the centre, and, with impious hands, Rifled the bowels of their mother earth For treasures, better hid. Soon had his crew Open'd into the hill a spacious wound, And digg'd out ribs of gold. Let none admire That riches grow in hell; that soil may best Deserve the precious bane. And here let those Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings, Learn how their greatest monuments of fame, And strength, and art are easily outdone By spirits reprobate, and in an hour, What in an age they, with incessant toil And hands innumerable, scarce perform. Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared, That underneath had veins of liquid fire Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude, With wondrous art, founded the massy ore, Severing each kind, and scumm'd the bullion dross: A third as soon had form'd within the ground A various mould, and, from the boiling cells, By strange conveyance fill'd each hollow nook: As in an organ, from one blast of wind, To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes. Anon, out of the earth a fabric huge Rose like an exhalation, with the sound

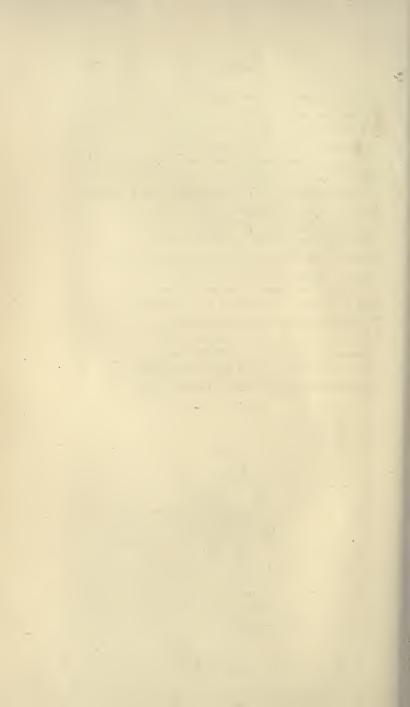
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet, Built like a temple, where pilasters round Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid With golden architrave; nor did there want Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven: The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon, Nor great Alcairo, such magnificence Equall'd in all their glories, to enshrine Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile Stood fix'd her stately height: and straight the doors, Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide Within, her ample spaces, o'er the smooth And level pavement; from the arched roof, Pendent by subtle magic, many a row Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light As from a sky. The hasty multitude Admiring enter'd; and the work some praise, And some the architect: his hand was known In heaven by many a tow'red structure high, Where sceptred angels held their residence, And sat as princes; whom the supreme King Exalted to such power, and gave to rule, Each in his hierarchy, the orders bright. Nor was his name unheard or unadored In ancient Greece: and in the Ausonian land Men call'd him Mulciber; and how he fell From heaven, they fabled, thrown by angry Jove Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve, A summer's day; and with the setting sun Dropp'd from the zenith, like a falling star,

On Lemnos, the Ægean isle: thus they relate, Erring; for he, with this rebellious rout, Fell long before; nor aught avail'd him now To have built in heaven high towers; nor did he 'scape By all his engines, but was headlong sent, With his industrious crew, to build in hell.

Meanwhile, the winged heralds, by command Of sovereign power, with awful ceremony And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim A solemn council, forthwith to be held At Pandemonium, the high capital Of Satan and his peers: their summons call'd From every band and squared regiment By place or choice the worthiest; they anon, With hundreds and with thousands, trooping came, Attended: all access was throng'd: the gates And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall (Though like a covered field, where champions bold. Wont ride in arm'd, and at the soldan's chair Defied the best of Panim chivalry To mortal combat, or career with lance), Thick swarm'd, both on the ground and in the air, Brush'd with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees In spring-time, when the sun with Taurus rides, Pour forth their populous youth about the hive In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank, The suburb of their straw-built citadel, New rubb'd with balm, expatiate, and confer Their state affairs; so thick the aëry crowd Swarm'd and were straiten'd; till, the signal given, Behold a wonder! They, but now who seem'd In bigness to surpass earth's giant sons, Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room

Throng numberless, like that pygmëan race Beyond the Indian mount: or fairy elves, Whose midnight revels, by a forest side Or fountain, some belated peasant sees, Or dreams he sees, while over head the moon Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth Wheels her pale course; they, on their mirth and dance Intent, with jocund music charm his ear; At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds. Thus incorporeal spirits to smallest forms Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large, Though without number still, amidst the hall Of that infernal court. But far within. And in their own dimensions, like themselves, The great seraphic lords and cherubim, In close recess and secret conclave, sat: A thousand demi-gods on golden seats Frequent and full. After short silence then, And summons read, the great consult began.





PARADISE LOST.

BOOK II.

THE ARGUMENT.

The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of heaven: some advise it, others dissuade; a third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan, to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal, or not much inferior, to themselves, about this time to be created. Their doubt, who shall be sent on this difficult search; Satan, their chief, undertakes alone the voyage; is honoured and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways, and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to hell-gates: finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them; by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between hell and heaven; with what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the power of that place, to the sight of this new world which he sought.



BOOK II.

IGH on a throne of royal state, which far Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind, Or where the gorgeous East, with richest hand, Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold, Satan exalted sat, by merit raised To that bad eminence: and from despair

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Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high; insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heaven; and, by success untaught,
His proud imaginations thus display'd:

"Powers and dominions, deities of heaven! For since no deep within her gulf can hold Immortal vigour, though oppress'd and fall'n, I give not heaven for lost: from this descent Celestial virtues rising, will appear More glorious and more dread than from no fall, And trust themselves to fear no second fate. Me, though just right, and the fix'd laws of heaven. Did first create your leader; next, free choice; With what besides, in council or in fight, Hath been achieved of merit; yet this loss, Thus far, at least, recover'd, hath much more Establish'd in a safe, unenvied throne, Yielded with full consent. The happier state In heaven, which follows dignity, might draw Envy from each inferior; but who here Will envy whom the highest place exposes Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim, Your bulwark; and condemns to greatest share Of endless pain? Where there is, then, no good For which to strive, no strife can grow up there From faction; for none sure will claim in hell Precédence; none whose portion is so small Of present pain, that with ambitious mind Will covet more! With this advantage, then, To union, and firm faith, and firm accord, More than can be in heaven, we now return To claim our just inheritance of old, Surer to prosper than prosperity Could have assured us; and by what best way,

Whether of open war, or covert guile, We now debate: who can advise, may speak."

He ceased; and next him, Moloch, sceptred king, Stood up, the strongest and the fiercest spirit That fought in heaven, now fiercer by despair: His trust was with the Eternal to be deem'd Equal in strength; and, rather than be less, Cared not to be at all; with that care lost Went all his fear: of God, or hell, or worse, He reck'd not; and these words thereafter spake;

"My sentence is for open war: of wiles, More unexpert, I boast not; them let those Contrive who need; or when they need, not now: For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest, Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait The signal to ascend, sit lingering here, Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling-place Accept this dark, opprobrious den of shame, The prison of his tyranny who reigns By our delay? No!-let us rather choose, Arm'd with hell-flames and fury, all at once, O'er heaven's high towers to force resistless way, Turning our tortures into horrid arms Against the torturer; when, to meet the noise Of his almighty engine, he shall hear Infernal thunder; and, for lightning, see Black fire and horror shot with equal rage Among his angels; and his throne itself Mix'd with Tartarean sulphur, and strange fire, His own invented torments. But, perhaps, The way seems difficult and steep to scale With upright wing against a higher foe. Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,

That in our proper motion we ascend Up to our native seat; descent and fall To us is adverse. Who but felt of late, When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear Insulting, and pursued us through the deep, With what compulsion and laborious flight We sank thus low? The ascent is easy then: The event is fear'd. Should we again provoke Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find To our destruction, if there be in hell Fear to be worse destroyed. What can be worse Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemn'd In this abhorred deep to utter woe; Where pain of unextinguishable fire Must exercise us, without hope of end, The vassals of his anger, when the scourge Inexorable, and the torturing hour, Call us to penance? More destroy'd than thus, We should be quite abolish'd, and expire. What fear we, then? what doubt we to incense His utmost ire? which, to the height enraged, Will either quite consume us, and reduce To nothing this essential (happier far Than miserable to have eternal being): Or, if our substance be indeed divine, And cannot cease to be, we are, at worst, On this side nothing; and by proof we feel Our power sufficient to disturb his heaven, And with perpetual inroads to alarm, Though inaccessible, his fatal throne; Which, if not victory, is yet revenge."

He ended frowning, and his look denounced Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous To less than gods. On the other side up rose Belial, in act more graceful and humane;
A fairer person lost not heaven; he seem'd
For dignity composed, and high exploit:
But all was false and hollow; though his tongue
Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were low:
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful; yet he pleased the ear,
And with persuasive accent thus began:

"I should be much for open war, O peers, As not behind in hate, if what was urged Main reason to persuade immediate war, Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast Ominous conjecture on the whole success; When he, who most excels in fact of arms, In what he counsels, and in what excels, Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair And utter dissolution, as the scope Of all his aim, after some dire revenge. First, what revenge? The towers of heaven are fill'd With armed watch, that render all access Impregnable: oft on the bordering deep Encamp their legions; or, with obscure wing, Scout far and wide into the realm of night, Scorning surprise. Or could we break our way By force, and at our heels all hell should rise, With blackest insurrection, to confound Heaven's purest light; yet our great enemy, All incorruptible, would on his throne Sit unpolluted: and the ethereal mould, Incapable of stain, would soon expel Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire, Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope

Is flat despair: we must exasperate The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage, And that must end us; that must be our cure-To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose, Though full of pain, this intellectual being-Those thoughts that wander through eternity, To perish rather, swallow'd up and lost In the wide womb of uncreated night, Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows, Let this be good, whether our angry foe Can give it, or will ever? How he can, Is doubtful; that he never will, is sure. Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire. Belike through impotence, or unaware, To give his enemies their wish, and end Them in his anger, whom his anger saves To punish endless? Wherefore cease we, then? Say they who counsel war, We are decreed, Reserved, and destined to eternal woe; Whatever doing, what can we suffer more— What can we suffer worse? Is this, then, worst-Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms? What! when we fled amain, pursued, and struck With heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought The deep to shelter us? This hell then seem'd A refuge from those wounds; or when we lay Chain'd on the burning lake? That sure was worse. What if the breath that kindled those grim fires, Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage, And plunge us in the flames? or, from above, Should intermitted vengeance arm again His red right hand to plague us? What if all Her stores were open'd, and this firmament Of hell should spout her cataracts of fire?

Impendent horrors! threatening hideous fall One day upon our heads; while we, perhaps, Designing or exhorting glorious war, Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurl'd Each on his rock transfix'd, the sport and prey Of racking whirlwinds; or for ever sunk Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains, There to converse with everlasting groans,



Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved, Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse. War, therefore, open or conceal'd, alike My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye Views all things at one view? He from heaven's height All these our motions vain sees and derides: Not more almighty to resist our might, Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles. Shall we, then, live thus vile, the race of heaven Thus trampled, thus expell'd, to suffer here Chains and these torments? Better these than worse, By my advice; since fate inevitable Subdues us, and omnipotent decree; The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do, Our strength is equal, nor the law unjust That so ordains: this was at first resolved, If we were wise, against so great a foe Contending, and so doubtful what might fall. I laugh, when those who at the spear are bold And venturous, if that fail them, shrink and fear What yet they know must follow, to endure Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain, The sentence of their Conqueror: this is now Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear, Our supreme foe, in time, may much remit His anger, and, perhaps, thus far removed, Not mind us not offending, satisfied With what is punish'd; whence these raging fires Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames. Our purer essence then will overcome Their noxious vapour; or, inured, not feel; Or, changed at length, and to the place conform'd In temper and in nature, will receive

Familiar the fierce heat, and void of pain;
This horror will grow mild, this darkness, light;
Besides what hope the never-ending-flight
Of future days may bring; what chance, what change,
Worth waiting; since our present lot appears
For happy, though but ill; for ill, not worst,
If we procure not to ourselves more woe."

Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb, Counsell'd ignoble ease, and peaceful sloth, Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake:

"Either to disenthrone the King of heaven We war, if war be best, or to regain Our own right lost: him to unthrone we then May hope, when everlasting fate shall yield To fickle chance, and Chaos judge the strife: The former, vain to hope, argues as vain The latter; for what place can be for us Within heaven's bound, unless heaven's Lord supreme We overpower? Suppose he should relent, And publish grace to all, on promise made Of new subjection; with what eyes could we Stand in his presence humble, and receive Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing Forced hallelujahs; while he lordly sits Our envied sovereign, and his altar breathes Ambrosial odours and ambrosial flowers. Our servile offerings? This must be our task In heaven, this our delight; how wearisome Eternity so spent, in worship paid To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue By force impossible, by leave obtain'd Unacceptable, though in heaven, our state Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek

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Our own good from ourselves, and from our own Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess, Free, and to none accountable, preferring Hard liberty before the easy yoke Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear Then most conspicuous, when great things of small, Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse, We can create: and in what place soe'er Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain, Through labour and endurance. This deep world Of darkness do we dread? How oft, amidst Thick clouds and dark, doth Heaven's all-ruling Sire Choose to reside, his glory unobscured, And, with the majesty of darkness round, Covers his throne; from whence deep thunders roar, Mustering their rage, and heaven resembles hell; As he our darkness, cannot we his light Imitate when we please? This desert soil Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold; Nor want we skill or art, from whence to raise Magnificence; and what can heaven show more? Our torments also may, in length of time, Become our elements, these piercing fires, As soft as now severe, our temper changed Into their temper, which must needs remove The sensible of pain. All things invite To peaceful counsels, and the settled state Of order, how in safety best we may Compose our present evils, with regard Of what we are, and where; dismissing quite All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise."

He scarce had finish'd, when such murmur fill'd The assembly, as when hollow rocks retain The sound of blustering winds, which all night long Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull Seafaring men o'erwatch'd, whose bark, by chance, Or pinnace anchors in a craggy bay After the tempest: such applause was heard As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased, Advising peace: for such another field They dreaded worse than hell: so much the fear Of thunder and the sword of Michael Wrought still within them, and no less desire To found this nether empire, which might rise, By policy, and long process of time, In emulation opposite to heaven. Which when Beëlzebub perceived, than whom, Satan except, none higher sat, with grave Aspect he rose, and in his rising seem'd A pillar of state; deep on his front engraven Deliberation sat, and public care; And princely counsel in his face yet shone Majestic, though in ruin: sage he stood, With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look Drew audience and attention still as night, Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake:

"Thrones, and imperial powers, offspring of heaven, Ethereal virtues! or these titles now
Must we renounce, and, changing style, be call'd
Princes of hell? for so the popular vote
Inclines here to continue, and build up here
A growing empire; doubtless, while we dream,
And know not that the King of heaven hath doom'd
This place our dungeon; not our safe retreat
Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
From heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league
Banded against his throne, but to remain

In strictest bondage, though thus far removed Under the inevitable curb, reserved His captive multitude; for he, be sure, In height or depth, still first and last will reign Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part By our revolt; but over hell extend His empire, and with iron sceptre rule Us here, as with his golden those in heaven. What sit we then projecting?—peace and war? War hath determined us, and foil'd with loss Irreparable; terms of peace yet none Vouchsafed or sought; for what peace will be given To us enslaved, but custody severe, And stripes, and arbitrary punishment, Inflicted? and what peace can we return, But, to our power, hostility and hate, Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow, Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice In doing what we most in suffering feel? Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need, With dangerous expedition, to invade Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault, or siege, Or ambush from the deep. What, if we find Some easier enterprise? There is a place (If ancient and prophetic fame in heaven Err not), another world, the happy seat Of some new race, call'd Man, about this time To be created like to us, though less In power and excellence, but favour'd more Of him who rules above; so was his will Pronounced among the gods; and by an oath, That shook heaven's whole circumference, confirm'd. Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn

What creatures there inhabit, of what mould Or substance, how endued, and what their power, And where their weakness, how attempted best, By force or subtilty. Though heaven be shut, And heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure In his own strength, this place may lie exposed, The utmost border of his kingdom, left To their defence who hold it: here, perhaps, Some advantageous act may be achieved By sudden onset; either with hell-fire To waste his whole creation, or possess All as our own, and drive, as we are driven, The puny habitants; or, if not drive, Seduce them to our party, that their God May prove their foe, and with repenting hand Abolish his own works. This would surpass Common revenge, and interrupt his joy In our confusion, and our joy upraise In his disturbance; when his darling sons, Hurl'd headlong to partake with us, shall curse Their frail original, and faded bliss-Faded so soon! Advise if this be worth Attempting, or to sit in darkness here Hatching vain empires." Thus Beëlzebub Pleaded his devilish counsel, first devised By Satan, and in part proposed: for whence, But from the author of all ill, could spring So deep a malice, to confound the race Of mankind in one root, and earth with hell To mingle and involve, done all to spite The great Creator? But their spite still serves His glory to augment. The bold design Pleased highly those infernal states, and joy Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent

They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews: "Well have ye judged, well ended long debate, Synod of gods! and, like to what ye are, Great things resolved, which, from the lowest deep, Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate, Nearer our ancient seat: perhaps in view Of those bright confines, whence, with neighbouring And opportune excursion, we may chance farms, Re-enter heaven; or else in some mild zone Dwell, not unvisited of heaven's fair light, Secure; and at the brightening orient beam Purge off this gloom: the soft delicious air, To heal the scar of these corrosive fires, Shall breathe her balm. But first, whom shall we send, In search of this new world? whom shall we find Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering feet The dark, unbottom'd, infinite abyss, And through the palpable obscure find out His uncouth way, or spread his aëry flight, Upborne, with indefatigable wings, Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive The happy isle? What strength, what art can then Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe Through the strict senteries and stations thick Of angels watching round? Here he had need All circumspection, and we now no less Choice in our suffrage; for, on whom we send, The weight of all and our last hope relies."

This said, he sat; and expectation held His look suspense, awaiting who appear'd To second, or oppose, or undertake The perilous attempt: but all sat mute, Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each In other's countenance read his own dismay, Astonish'd: none among the choice and prime Of those heaven-warring champions could be found So hardy, as to proffer or accept, Alone, the dreadful voyage; till, at last, Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised Above his fellows, with monarchal pride, Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:

"O progeny of heaven! empyreal thrones! With reason hath deep silence and demur Seized us, though undismay'd. Long is the way And hard, that out of hell leads up to light; Our prison strong; this huge convex of fire, Outrageous to devour, immures us round Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant, Barr'd over us, prohibit all egress. These pass'd, if any pass, the void profound Of unessential night receives him next Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf. If thence he 'scape into whatever world, Or unknown region, what remains him less Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape? But I should ill become this throne, O peers, And this imperial sovereignty, adorn'd With splendour, arm'd with power, if aught proposed And judged of public moment, in the shape Of difficulty or danger, could deter Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume These royalties, and not refuse to reign, Refusing to accept as great a share Of hazard as of honour, due alike To him who reigns, and so much to him due Of hazard more, as he above the rest High honour'd sits? Go, therefore, mighty powers,

Terror of heaven, though fallen; intend at home (While here shall be our home) what best may ease The present misery, and render hell More tolerable; if there be cure or charm To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain Of this ill mansion. Intermit no watch Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad, Through all the coasts of dark destruction, seek Deliverance for us all. This enterprise None shall partake with me." Thus saying, rose The monarch, and prevented all reply; Prudent, lest, from his resolution raised, Others among the chief might offer now (Certain to be refused) what erst they fear'd; And, so refused, might in opinion stand His rivals; winning cheap the high repute, Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they Dreaded not more the adventure, than his voice Forbidding: and at once with him they rose: Their rising all at once, was as the sound Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend With awful reverence prone; and as a god Extol him equal to the Highest in heaven. Nor fail'd they to express how much they praised, That for the general safety he despised His own: for neither do the spirits damn'd Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites, Or close ambition, varnish'd o'er with zeal. Thus they their doubtful consultations dark Ended, rejoicing in their matchless chief; As when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds Ascending, while the north wind sleeps, o'erspread Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element

Scowls o'er the darken'd landskip snow, or shower; If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet, Extend his evening beam, the fields revive, The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.

O shame to men! devil with devil damn'd Firm concord holds, men only disagree

Of creatures rational, though under hope

Of heavenly grace; and, God proclaiming peace, Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife,

Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,

Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:

As if (which might induce us to accord)

Man had not hellish foes enow besides,

That day and night for his destruction wait.

The Stygian council thus dissolved, and forth In order came the grand infernal peers: Midst came their mighty paramount, and seem'd Alone the antagonist of heaven, nor less Than hell's dread emperor, with pomp supreme, And god-like imitated state: him round A globe of fiery seraphim enclosed With bright emblazonry, and horrent arms. Then, of their session ended, they bid cry With trumpet's regal sound the great result: Toward the four winds four speedy cherubim Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy, By herald's voice explain'd; the hollow abyss Heard far and wide, and all the host of hell With deafening shout return'd them loud acclaim. Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised By false presumptuous hope, the ranged powers Disband, and, wandering, each his several way Pursues, as inclination or sad choice

Leads him, perplex'd, where he may likeliest find Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain The irksome hours, till his great chief return. Part on the plain, or in the air sublime, Upon the wing, or in swift race contend, As at the Olympian games or Pythian fields; Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal With rapid wheels, or fronted brigades form. As when, to warn proud cities, war appears Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush To battle in the clouds, before each van Prick forth the aëry knights, and couch their spears, Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms From either end of heaven the welkin burns. Others, with vast Typhœan rage, more fell, Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air In whirlwind; hell scarce holds the wild uproar. As when Alcides, from Œchalia crown'd With conquest, felt the envenom'd robe, and tore Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines, And Lichas from the top of Œta threw Into the Euboic sea. Others, more mild, Retreated in a silent valley, sing With notes angelical to many a harp Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall By doom of battle! and complain that fate Free virtue should inthral to force or chance. Their song was partial; but the harmony (What could it less when spirits immortal sing?) Suspended hell, and took with ravishment The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet (For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense) Others apart sat on a hill retired, In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high



Of providence, fore-knowledge, will, and fate; Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute, And found no end, in wandering mazes lost. Of good and evil much they argued then: Of happiness and final misery, Passion and apathy, and glory and shame, Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy: Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm Pain for awhile, or anguish, and excite

Fallacious hope, or arm the obdured breast With stubborn patience, as with triple steel. Another part, in squadrons and gross bands, On bold adventure to discover wide That dismal world, if any clime, perhaps, Might yield them easier habitation, bend Four ways their flying march, along the banks Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge Into the burning lake their baleful streams: Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate: Sad Acheron, of sorrow, black and deep; Cocytus, named of lamentation loud Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegethon, Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage. Far off from these, a slow and silent stream, Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks, Forthwith his former state and being forgets— Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain. Beyond this flood a frozen continent Lies, dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems Of ancient pile, or else deep snow and ice, A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog Betwixt Damiata and mount Casius old. Where armies whole have sunk: the parching air Burns frore, and cold performs the effect of fire. Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled, At certain revolutions, all the damn'd Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce; From beds of raging fire, to starve in ice Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine

Immovable, infix'd, and frozen round, Periods of time; thence hurried back to fire. They ferry over this Lethean sound, Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment, And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose, In sweet forgetfulness, all pain and woe, All in one moment, and so near the brink; But Fate withstands, and to oppose the attempt Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards The ford, and of itself the water flies All taste of living wight, as once it fled The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on In confused march forlorn, the adventurous bands, With shuddering horror pale, and eyes aghast, View'd first their lamentable lot, and found No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale They pass'd, and many a region dolorous, O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp, Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death, A universe of death; which God by curse Created evil, for evil only good; Where all life dies, death lives, and nature breeds, Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things, Abominable, unutterable, and worse Than fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceived, Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire.

Meanwhile the adversary of God and man, Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design, Puts on swift wings, and towards the gates of hell Explores his solitary flight: sometimes He scours the right hand coast, sometimes the left; Now shaves with level wing the deep, then soars Up to the flery concave towering high.

As when far off at sea a fleet descried Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood, Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape, Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so seem'd Far off the flying fiend. At last appear Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof, And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass, Three iron, three of adamantine rock, Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire, Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat On either side a formidable shape; The one seem'd woman to the waist, and fair; But ended foul in many a scaly fold, Voluminous and vast; a serpent arm'd With mortal sting: about her middle round A cry of hell-hounds never-ceasing, bark'd, With wide Cerberean mouths, full loud, and rung A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would creep, If aught disturb'd their noise, into her womb, And kennel there; yet there still bark'd and howl'd, Within unseen. Far less abhorr'd than these Vex'd Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore: Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, call'd In secret, riding through the air she comes, Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon Eclipses at their charms. The other shape, If shape it might be call'd that shape had none, Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb; Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd,

For each seemed either; black it stood as night, Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as hell, And shook a dreadful dart; what seem'd his head The likeness of a kingly crown had on. Satan was now at hand, and from his seat The monster moving onward, came as fast With horrid strides; hell trembled as he strode.



The undaunted fiend what this might be admired, Admired not fear'd; God and his Son except, Created thing naught valued he, nor shunn'd; And with disdainful look, thus first began:

"Whence, and what art thou, execrable shape, That darest, though grim and terrible, advance Thy miscreated front athwart my way To yonder gates? through them I mean to pass, That be assured, without leave ask'd of thee: Retire, or taste thy folly, and learn by proof, Hell-born, not to contend with spirits of heaven."

To whom the goblin, full of wrath, replied: "Art thou that traitor-angel, art thou he, Who first broke peace in heaven, and faith till then Unbroken; and in proud, rebellious arms, Drew after him the third part of heaven's sons, Conjured against the Highest; for which both thou And they, outcast from God, are here condemn'd To waste eternal days in woe and pain? And reckon'st thou thyself with spirits of heaven, Hell-doom'd, and breath'st defiance here and scorn, Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more, Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment, False fugitive, and to thy speed add wings, Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue Thy lingering, or, with one stroke of this dart, Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before."

So spake the grisly terror, and in shape, So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold More dreadful and deform. On the other side, Incensed with indignation, Satan stood Unterrified, and like a comet burn'd, That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge In the artic sky, and from his horrid hair

Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head Levell'd his deadly aim; their fatal hands No second stroke intend; and such a frown Each cast at the other, as when two black clouds, With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on Over the Caspian, then stand front to front, Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow To join their dark encounter in mid-air; So frown'd the mighty combatants, that hell Grew darker at their frown; so match'd they stood; For never but once more was either like To meet so great a foe: and now great deeds Had been achieved, whereof all hell had rung, Had not the snaky sorceress, that sat Fast by hell-gate, and kept the fatal key, Risen, and, with hideous outcry, rush'd between.

"O father, what intends thy hands," she cried,
"Against thy only son? What fury, O son,
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
Against thy father's head? and know'st for whom?
For him who sits above and laughs the while
At thee, ordain'd his drudge, to execute
Whate'er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids;
His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both."

She spake, and at her words the hellish pest Forbore: then these to her Satan return'd:

"So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange Thou interposest, that my sudden hand, Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds What it intends, till first I know of thee, What thing thou art, thus double-form'd; and why, In this infernal vale first met, thou call'st Me father, and that phantasm call'st my son:

I know thee not, nor ever saw, till now, Sight more detestable than him and thee."

To whom thus the portress of hell-gate replied: "Hast thou forgot me, then, and do I seem Now in thine eye so foul? once deem'd so fair In heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight Of all the seraphim with thee combined In bold conspiracy against heaven's King, All on a sudden miserable pain Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast Threw forth; till on the left side opening wide, Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright, Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess arm'd, Out of thy head I sprung; amazement seized All the host of heaven; back they recoil'd, afraid At first, and call'd me Sin, and for a sign Portentous held me; but, familiar grown, I pleased, and with attractive graces won The most averse, thee chiefly, who full oft Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing, Becamest enamour'd, and such joy thou took'st With me in secret, that my womb conceived A growing burden. Meanwhile, war arose, And fields were fought in heaven: wherein remain'd (For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe Clear victory; to our part loss and rout Through all the empyréan: down they fell, Driven headlong from the pitch of heaven, down Into this deep; and in the general fall I also: at which time this powerful key Into my hands was given, with charge to keep These gates for ever shut, which none can pass Without my opening. Pensive here I sat

Alone; but long I sat not, till my womb, Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown, Prodigious motion felt, and rueful throes. At last this odious offspring whom thou seest, Thine own begotten, breaking violent way, Tore through my entrails, that with fear and pain Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew Transform'd: but he my inbred enemy Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart, Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out, Death! Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sigh'd From all her caves, and back resounded, Death! I fled; but he pursued (though more, it seems, Inflamed with lust than rage), and, swifter far, Me overtook, his mother, all dismay'd, And in embraces, forcible and foul, Engendering with me, of that rape begot These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry Surround me, as thou saw'st, hourly conceived And hourly born, with sorrow infinite To me: for, when they list, into the womb That bred them they return, and howl, and gnaw My bowels, their repast; then bursting forth Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round, That rest or intermission none I find. Before mine eyes in opposition sits Grim Death, my son and foe; who sets them on, And me, his parent, would full soon devour For want of other prey, but that he knows His end with mine involved; and knows that I Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane, Whenever that shall be; so fate pronounced. But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope

To be invulnerable in those bright arms, Though temper'd heavenly; for that mortal dint, Save he who reigns above, none can resist."

She finish'd; and the subtle fiend his lore Soon learn'd, now milder, and thus answer'd smooth:

"Dear daughter, since thou claim'st me for thy sire, And my fair son here shew'st me, the dear pledge Of dalliance had with thee in heaven, and joys Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change Befallen us, unforseen, unthought of; know, I come no enemy, but to set free From out this dark and dismal house of pain Both him and thee, and all the heavenly host Of spirits, that, in our just pretences arm'd, Fell with us from on high: from them I go This uncouth errand sole; and, one for all, Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread The unfounded deep, and through the void immense To search, with wandering quest, a place foretold Should be, and, by concurring signs, ere now Created, vast and round, a place of bliss In the purlieus of heaven, and therein placed A race of upstart creatures, to supply, Perhaps, our vacant room; though more removed, Lest heaven, surcharged with potent multitude, Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught Than this more secret, now design'd, I haste To know; and, this once known, shall soon return, And bring ye to the place where thou and Death Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen Wing silently the buxom air, embalm'd With odours; there ye shall be fed and fill'd Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey." He ceased, for both seem'd highly pleased, and Death

Grinn'd horrible a ghastly smile, to hear His famine should be fill'd; and bless'd his maw Destined to that good hour: no less rejoiced His mother bad, and thus bespake her sire:

"The key of this infernal pit by due, And by command of heaven's all powerful King, I keep, by him forbidden to unlock These adamantine gates; against all force Death ready stands to interpose his dart, Fearless to be o'ermatch'd by living might. But what owe I to his commands above Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down Into this gloom of Tartarus profound, To sit in hateful office here confined, Inhabitant of heaven, and heavenly-born. Here, in perpetual agony and pain, With terrors and with clamours compass'd round Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed? Thou art my father, thou my author, thou My being gavest me; whom should I obey But thee? whom follow? Thou wilt bring me soon To that new world of light and bliss, among The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems Thy daughter and thy darling, without end."

Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;
And, towards the gate rolling her bestial train,
Forthwith the huge portcullis high up-drew,
Which, but herself, not all the Stygian powers
Could once have moved; then in the key-hole turns
The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
Of massy iron or solid rock with ease
Unfastens. On a sudden open fly,

With impetuous recoil and jarring sound, The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook Of Erebus. She open'd, but to shut Excell'd her power: the gates wide open stood, That with extended wings a banner'd host, Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through, With horse and chariots rank'd in loose array; So wide they stood, and, like a furnace-mouth, Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame. Before their eyes in sudden view appear The secrets of the hoary deep; a dark Illimitable ocean, without bound, Without dimension, where length, breadth, and height, And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise Of endless wars, and by confusion stand. For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce, Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring Their embryon atoms; they around the flag Of each his faction, in their several clans, Light-arm'd or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow, Swarm populous, unnumber'd as the sands Of Barca or Cyrene's torrid soil, Levied to side with warring winds, and poise Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere, He rules a moment: Chaos umpire sits, And by decision more embroils the fray By which he reigns: next him, high arbiter, Chance governs all. Into this wild abyss, The womb of Nature, and, perhaps, her grave, Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire, But all these in their pregnant causes mix'd

Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight, Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain His dark materials to create more worlds: Into this wild abyss, the wary fiend Stood on the brink of hell, and look'd awhile, Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith Nor was his ear less peal'd He had to cross. With noises loud and ruinous (to compare Great things with small) than when Bellona storms With all her battering engines bent to rase Some capital city; or less than if this frame Of heaven were falling, and these elements In mutiny had from her axle torn The steadfast earth. At last his sail-broad vans He spreads for flight, and in the surging smoke Uplifted spurns the ground; thence many a league, As in a cloudy chair ascending, rides Audacious; but, that seat soon falling, meets A vast vacuity: all unawares, Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb down he drops Ten thousand fathom deep; and to this hour Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance, The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud, Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him As many miles aloft: that fury stay'd, Quench'd in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea, Nor good dry land, nigh founder'd, on he fares, Treading the crude consistence, half on foot, Half-flying: behoves him now both oar and sail. As when a gryphon through the wilderness With winged course, o'er hill or moory dale, Pursues the Arimaspian, who, by stealth, Had, from his wakeful custody, purloin'd The guarded gold: so eagerly the fiend

O'er bog, or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare, With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way, And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies: At length, a universal hubbub wild Of stunning sounds, and voices all confused, Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear With loudest vehemence: thither he plies, Undaunted, to meet there whatever power Or spirit of the nethermost abyss Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies Bordering on light; when straight behold the throne Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread Wide on the wasteful deep; with him enthroned Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of things, The consort of his reign; and by them stood Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name Of Demogorgon; Rumour next, and Chance, And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroil'd. And Discord, with a thousand various mouths.

To whom Satan, turning boldly, thus: "Ye powers And spirits of this nethermost abyss, Chaos and ancient Night, I come, no spy, With purpose to explore or to disturb The secrets of your realm; but, by constraint Wandering this darksome desert, as my way Lies through your spacious empire up to light, Alone, and without guide, half lost, I seek What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds Confine with heaven; or, if some other place, From your dominion won, the ethereal King, Possesses lately, thither to arrive I travel this profound; direct my course; Directed no mean recompense it brings

To your behoof, if I that region lost, All usurpation thence expell'd, reduce To her original darkness, and your sway (Which is my present journey), and once more Erect the standard there of ancient Night: Yours be the advantage all, mine the revenge."

Thus Satan: and him thus the Anarch old, With faltering speech and visage incomposed, Answer'd: "I know thee, stranger, who thou art: That mighty leading angel, who, of late, Made head 'gainst heaven's King, though overthrown. I saw and heard: for such a numerous host Fled not in silence through the frighted deep, With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout, Confusion worse confounded; and heaven-gates Pour'd out by millions her victorious bands, Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here Keep residence; if all I can will serve That little which is left so to defend, Encroach'd on still through your intestine broils, Weakening the sceptre of old Night: first hell, Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath; Now lately heaven and earth, another world, Hung o'er my realm, link'd in a golden chain, To that side heaven, from whence your legions fell; If that way be your walk, you have not far; So much the nearer danger; go, and speed; Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain."

He ceased; and Satan stay'd not to reply, But, glad that now his sea should find a shore, With fresh alacrity and force renew'd, Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire, Into the wild expanse, and, through the shock Of fighting elements, on all sides round Environ'd, wins his way; harder beset And more endanger'd, than when Argo pass'd Through Bosphorus, betwixt the justling rocks: Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunn'd Charybdis, and by the other whirlpool steer'd. So he with difficulty and labour hard Moved on, with difficulty and labour he; But he once pass'd, soon after, when man fell, Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain Following his track (such was the will of Heaven), Paved after him a broad and beaten way Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length, From hell continued, reaching the utmost orb, Of this frail world: by which the spirits perverse With easy intercourse pass to and fro To tempt or punish mortals, except whom God and good angels guard by special grace. But now, at last, the sacred influence Of light appears, and from the walls of heaven Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night A glimmering dawn: here Nature first begins Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire, As from her outmost works, a broken foe, With tumult less, and with less hostile din, That Satan with less toil, and now with ease, Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light, And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn; Or in the emptier waste, resembling air, Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold Far off the empyreal heaven, extended wide In circuit, undetermined square or round,

With opal towers and battlements adorn'd Of living sapphire, once his native seat; And fast by, hanging in a golden chain, This pendent world, in bigness as a star Of smallest magnitude, close by the moon. Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge, Accurst, and in a cursed hour, he hies.





PARADISE LOST.

BOOK III.

THE ARGUMENT.

God, sitting on his throne, sees Satan flying towards this world, then newly created: shows him to the Son, who sat at his right hand; foretels the success of Satan in perverting mankind, clears his own justice and wisdom from all imputation, having created man free, and able enough to have withstood his tempter; yet declares his purpose of grace towards him, in regard he fell not of his own malice, as did Satan, but by him seduced. The Son of God renders praises to his Father for the manifestation of his gracious purpose towards man; but God again declares, that grace cannot be extended towards man without the satisfaction of divine justice: man hath offended the majesty of God by aspiring to godhead, and therefore, with all his progeny devoted to death, must die, unless some one can be found sufficient to answer for his offence, and undergo his punishment. The Son of God freely offers himself a ransom for man: the Father accepts him, ordains his incarnation, pronounces his exaltation above all names in heaven and earth; commands all the angels to adore him. They obey, and by hymning to their harps in full quire, celebrate the Father and the Son. Meanwhile, Satan alights upon the bare convex of this world's outermost orb; where, wandering, he first finds a place, since called the "Limbo of Vanity:" what persons and things fly up thither: thence comes to the gate of heaven, described ascending by stairs, and the waters above the firmament that flow about it: his passage thence to the orb of the sun: he finds there Uriel, the regent of that orb, but first changes himself into the shape of a meaner angel; and pretending a zealous desire to behold the new creation, and man, whom God had placed here, inquires of him the place of his habitation, and is directed: alights first on mount Niphates.



AIL, holy Light! offspring of heaven first-born!
Or of the Eternal coeternal beam,
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate!

Or hear'st thou rather, pure ethereal stream, Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the sun. Before the heavens thou wert, and at the voice Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest The rising world of waters dark and deep, Won from the void and formless infinite. Thee I revisit now with bolder wing, Escaped the Stygian pool, though long detain'd In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight, Through utter and through middle darkness borne. With other notes than to the Orphean lyre, I sung of Chaos and eternal Night; Taught by the heavenly muse to venture down The dark descent, and up to re-ascend, Though hard and rare: thee I revisit safe, And feel thy sovereign vital lamp: but thou Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn; So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs. Or dim suffusion veil'd. Yet not the more Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill, Smit with the love of sacred song: but chief Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath. That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow. Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget Those other two equall'd with me in fate. So were I equall'd with them in renown. Blind Thamyris, and blind Mæonides. And Tiresias, and Phineus, prophets old: Then feed on thoughts that voluntary move Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid, Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year

Seasons return; but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off; and, for the book of knowledge fair,
Presented with a universal blank
Of Nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
And Wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou, celestial light,
Shine inward, and the mind, through all her powers,
Irradiate; there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

Now had the Almighty Father from above, From the pure empyréan where he sits High throned above all height, bent down his eye, His own works, and their works, at once to view: About him all the sanctities of heaven Stood thick as stars, and from his sight received Beatitude past utterance; on his right The radiant image of his glory sat, His only Son; on earth he first beheld Our two first parents, yet the only two Of mankind, in the happy garden placed, Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love, Uninterrupted joy, unrivall'd love, In blissful solitude; he then survey'd Hell and the gulf between, and Satan there Coasting the wall of heaven on this side night, In the dun air sublime, and ready now To stoop, with wearied wings, and willing feet, On the bare outside of this world, that seem'd

Firm land imbosom'd without firmament, Uncertain which, in ocean or in air. Him God beholding from his prospect high, Wherein past, present, future, he beholds, Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake:

"Only-begotten Son, seest thou what rage Transports our adversary? whom no bounds Prescribed, no bars of hell, nor all the chains Heap'd on him there, nor yet the main abyss Wide interrupt, can hold; so bent he seems On desperate revenge, that shall redound Upon his own rebellious head. And now, Through all restraint broke loose, he wings his way Not far off heaven, in the precincts of light, Directly towards the new-created world, And man there placed, with purpose to essay If him by force he can destroy, or, worse, By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert: For man will hearken to his glozing lies, And easily transgress the sole command, Sole pledge of his obedience: so will fall He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault? Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me All he could have; I made him just and right, Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall. Such I created all the ethereal powers And spirits, both them who stood, and them who fail'd; Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell. Not free, what proof could they have given sincere Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love, Where only what they needs must do appear'd, Not what they would? What praise could they receive? What pleasure I from such obedience paid, When will and reason (reason also 's choice),

Useless and vain, of freedom both despoil'd, Made passive both, had served necessity, Not me? They, therefore, as to right belong'd, So were created, nor can justly accuse Their Maker, or their making, or their fate, As if predestination overruled Their will, disposed by absolute decree Or high foreknowledge: they themselves decreed Their own revolt, not I. If I foreknew, Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault, Which had no less proved certain, unforeknown. So without least impulse or shadow of fate, Or aught by me immutably foreseen, They trespass, authors to themselves in all Both what they judge, and what they choose; for so I form'd them free: and free they must remain, Till they inthral themselves; I else must change Their nature, and revoke the high decree Unchangeable, eternal, which ordain'd Their freedom; they themselves ordain'd their fall. The first sort by their own suggestion fell, Self-tempted, self-depraved: man falls, deceived By the other first: man, therefore, shall find grace; The other, none: in mercy and justice both, Through heaven and earth, so shall my glory excel; But mercy, first and last, shall brightest shine."

Thus while God spake, ambrosial fragrance fill'd All heaven, and in the blessed spirits elect Sense of new joy ineffable diffused.

Beyond compare the Son of God was seen Most glorious: in him all his Father shone Substantially express'd; and in his face Divine compassion visibly appear'd, Love without end, and, without measure, grace, Which uttering, thus he to his Father spake:

"O Father, gracious was that word which closed Thy sovereign sentence, that man should find grace; For which both heaven and earth shall high extol Thy praises, with the innumerable sound Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne Encompass'd shall resound thee ever blest: For should man finally be lost, should man, Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son, Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though join'd With his own folly? That be from thee far, That far be from thee, Father, who art judge Of all things made, and judgest only right. Or shall the adversary thus obtain His end, and frustrate thine? shall he fulfil His malice, and thy goodness bring to nought? Or proud return, though to his heavier doom, Yet with revenge accomplish'd, and to hell Draw after him the whole race of mankind, By him corrupted? or wilt thou thyself Abolish thy creation, and unmake, For him, what for thy glory thou hast made? So should thy goodness and thy greatness both Be question'd and blasphemed without defence." To whom the great Creator thus replied:

"O Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight, Son of my bosom, Son who art alone My word, my wisdom, and effectual might, All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all As my eternal purpose hath decreed:

Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will; Yet not of will in him, but grace in me Freely vouchsafed; once more I will renew His lapsed powers, though forfeit, and inthrall'd By sin to foul exorbitant desires; Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand

On even ground against his mortal foe; By me upheld, that he may know how frail His fall'n condition is, and to me owe All his deliv'rance, and to none but me. Some I have chosen of peculiar grace, Elect above the rest; so is my will: The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warn'd Their sinful state, and to appease betimes The incensed Deity, while offer'd grace Invites; for I will clear their senses dark. What may suffice, and soften stony hearts To pray, repent, and bring obedience due. To prayer, repentance, and obedience due, Though but endeavour'd with sincere intent, Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut. And I will place within them, as a guide, My umpire, conscience; whom, if they will hear, Light after light, well used, they shall attain, And to the end persisting, safe arrive. This, my long sufferance, and my day of grace, They who neglect and scorn shall never taste; But hard be harden'd, blind be blinded more, That they may stumble on, and deeper fall; And none but such from mercy I exclude. But yet all is not done; man disobeying, Disloyal, breaks his fealty, and sins Against the high supremacy of Heaven, Affecting godhead, and, so losing all, To expiate his treason hath nought left, But to destruction sacred and devote. He, with his whole posterity, must die. Die, he or justice must; unless for him Some other, able, and as willing, pay The rigid satisfaction; death for death.

Say, heavenly powers, where shall we find such love? Which of ye will be mortal, to redeem Man's mortal crime; and just, the unjust to save? Dwells in all heaven charity so dear?"

He ask'd, but all the heavenly quire stood mute, And silence was in heaven: on man's behalf Patron or intercessor none appear'd, Much less that durst upon his own head draw The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set.

And now, without redemption, all mankind Must have been lost, adjudged to death and hell By doom severe, had not the Son of God, In whom the fulness dwells of love divine, His dearest mediation thus renew'd:

"Father, thy word is pass'd, man shall find grace; And shall grace not find means, that finds her way, The speediest of thy winged messengers, To visit all thy creatures, and to all Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought? Happy for man, so coming; he her aid Can never seek, once dead in sins, and lost: Atonement for himself, or offering meet, Indebted and undone, hath none to bring: Behold me, then; me for him, life for life I offer; on me let thine anger fall; Account me man; I for his sake will leave Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee Freely put off, and for him lastly die Well pleased; on me let Death wreak all his rage. Under his gloomy power I shall not long Lie vanquish'd; thou hast given me to possess Life in myself for ever; by thee I live, Though now to Death I yield, and am his due, All that of me can die: yet, that debt paid,

Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave, His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul For ever with corruption there to dwell: But I shall rise victorious, and subdue My vanguisher, spoil'd of his vaunted spoil; Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarm'd. I, through the ample air, in triumph high Shall lead hell captive, maugre hell, and show The powers of darkness bound. Thou, at the sight Pleased, out of heaven shalt look down, and smile, While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes, Death last, and with his carcass glut the grave: Then, with the multitude of my redeem'd, Shall enter heaven, long absent, and return, Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud Of anger shall remain, but peace assured And reconcilement; wrath shall be no more Thenceforth, but in thy presence joy entire."

His words here ended, but his meek aspect
Silent yet spake, and breathed immortal love
To mortal men, above which only shone
Filial obedience; as a sacrifice
Glad to be offered, he attends the will
Of his great Father. Admiration seized
All heaven, what this might mean, and whither tend,
Wondering; but soon the Almighty thus replied:

"O thou, in heaven and earth the only peace Found out for mankind under wrath! O thou, My sole complacence! well thou know'st how dear To me are all my works, nor man the least, Though last created; that for him I spare Thee from my bosom and right hand, to save, By losing thee awhile, the whole race lost.

Thou, therefore, whom thou only canst redeem, Their nature also to thy nature join; And be thyself man among men on earth, Made flesh, when time shall be, of virgin seed, By wondrous birth; be thou in Adam's room The head of all mankind, though Adam's son. As in him perish all men, so in thee, As from a second root, shall be restored As many as are restored; without thee, none. His crime makes guilty all his sons; thy merit, Imputed, shall absolve them who renounce Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds, And live in thee transplanted, and from thee Receive new life. So man, as is most just, Shall satisfy for man, be judged and die, And dying rise, and rising with him, raise His brethren, ransom'd with his own dear life. So heavenly love shall outdo hellish hate, Giving to death, and dving to redeem, So dearly to redeem, what hellish hate So easily destroy'd, and still destroys In those who, when they may, accept not grace. Nor shalt thou, by descending to assume Man's nature, lessen or degrade thine own. Because thou hast, though throned in highest bliss Equal to God, and equally enjoying God-like fruition, quitted all to save A world from utter loss, and hast been found By merit more than birthright, Son of God-Found worthiest to be so, by being good, Far more than great or high; because in thee Love hath abounded more than glory abounds, Therefore thy humiliation shall exalt With thee thy manhood also to this throne;

Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt reign Both God and man, Son both of God and man, Anointed universal King; all power I give thee; reign for ever, and assume Thy merits: under thee, as head supreme, Thrones, princedoms, powers, dominions, I reduce: All knees to thee shall bow, of them that bide In heaven, or earth, or under earth in hell. When thou, attended gloriously from heaven, Shalt in the sky appear, and from thee send The summoning archangels to proclaim Thy dread tribunal: forthwith from all winds The living, and forthwith the cited dead Of all past ages, to the general doom Shall hasten; such a peal shall rouse their sleep. Then, all thy saints assembled, thou shalt judge Bad men and angels; they arraign'd, shall sink Beneath thy sentence: hell, her numbers full. Thenceforth shall be for ever shut. Meanwhile The world shall burn, and from her ashes spring New heaven and earth, wherein the just shall dwell, And, after all their tribulations long, See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds, With joy and love triumphing, and fair truth. Then thou thy regal sceptre shalt lay by, For regal sceptre then no more shall need; God shall be all in all. But, all ye gods, Adore him who, to compass all this, dies; Adore the Son, and honour him as me."

No sooner had the Almighty ceased, but all The multitude of angels, with a shout, Loud as from numbers without number, sweet As from blest voices, uttering joy, heaven rung With jubilee, and loud hosannas fill'd The eternal regions: lowly reverent
Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground,
With solemn adoration, down they cast
Their crowns, inwove with amarant and gold;
Immortal amarant, a flower which once
In Paradise, fast by the tree of life,
Began to bloom; but soon for man's offence
To heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows,
And flowers aloft, shading the fount of life,



And where the river of bliss through midst of heaven Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream; With these, that never fade, the spirits elect Bind their resplendent locks, inwreath'd with beams: Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone, Impurpled with celestial roses, smiled. Then, crown'd again, their golden harps they took, Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side Like quivers hung, and with preamble sweet Of charming symphony they introduce Their sacred song, and waken raptures high: No voice exempt, no voice but well could join Melodious part, such concord is in heaven.

Thee, Father, first they sung, Omnipotent, Immutable, Immortal, Infinite, Eternal King; thee, Author of all being, Fountain of light, thyself invisible Amidst the glorious brightness, where thou sitt'st Throned inaccessible, but when thou shadest The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud Drawn round about thee, like a radiant shrine, Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear, Yet dazzle heaven, that brightest seraphim Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes. Thee, next they sang, of all creation first, Begotten Son, Divine Similitude, In whose conspicuous count'nance, without cloud Made visible, the Almighty Father shines, Whom else no creature can behold: on thee Impress'd the effulgence of his glory abides, Transfused on thee his ample Spirit rests. He heaven of heavens, and all the powers therein, By thee created; and by thee threw down

The aspiring dominations: thou that day Thy Father's dreadful thunder didst not spare, Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels, that shook Heaven's everlasting frame, while o'er the necks Thou drovest of warring angels disarray'd. Back from pursuit, thy powers with loud acclaim Thee only extoll'd, Son of thy Father's might, To execute fierce vengeance on his foes; Not so on man: him, through their malice fall'n, Father of mercy and grace, thou didst not doom So strictly, but much more to pity incline: No sooner did thy dear and only Son Perceive thee purposed not to doom frail man So strictly, but much more to pity inclined; He, to appease thy wrath, and end the strife Of mercy and justice in thy face discern'd, Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat Second to thee, offer'd himself to die For man's offence. O unexampled love! Love no where to be found less than divine! Hail, Son of God, Saviour of men! Thy name Shall be the copious matter of my song Henceforth, and never shall my harp thy praise Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin!

Thus they in heaven, above the starry sphere, Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent. Meanwhile, upon the firm opacous globe Of this round world, whose first convex divides The luminous inferior orbs, enclosed From Chaos, and the inroad of darkness old, Satan alighted walks: a globe far off It seem'd, now seems a boundless continent, Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of night Starless, exposed, and ever-threat'ning storms

Of Chaos blustering round, inclement sky; Save on that side which, from the wall of heaven, Though distant far, some small reflection gains Of glimmering air, less vex'd with tempest loud: Here walked the fiend at large in spacious field. As when a vulture, on Imaüs bred, Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds, Dislodging from a region scarce of prey, To gorge the flesh of lambs or yearling kids, On hills where flocks are fed, flies towards the springs Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams; But in his way lights on the barren plains Of Sericana, where Chineses drive With sails and wind their cany wagons light: So, on this windy sea of land, the fiend Walk'd up and down alone, bent on his prey; Alone, for other creature in this place, Living or lifeless, to be found was none; None yet, but store hereafter, from the earth Up hither, like aërial vapours, flew Of all things transitory and vain, when sin With vanity had fill'd the works of men; Both all things vain, and all who in vain things Built their fond hopes of glory or lasting fame, Or happiness in this or the other life: All who have their reward on earth, the fruits Of painful superstition and blind zeal, Nought seeking but the praise of men, here find Fit retribution, empty as their deeds; All the unaccomplish'd works of Nature's hand, Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mix'd, Dissolved on earth, fleet hither, and in vain, Till final dissolution, wander here: Not in the neighbouring moon, as some have dream'd;

Those argent fields, more likely habitants, Translated saints, or middle spirits, hold, Betwixt the angelical and human kind. Hither, of ill-join'd sons and daughters born, First from the ancient world those giants came, With many a vain exploit, though then renown'd: The builders next of Babel on the plain Of Sennaar, and still with vain design New Babels, had they wherewithal, would build: Others came single; he, who to be deem'd A god, leap'd fondly into Ætna flames, Empedocles; and he who, to enjoy Plato's Elysium, leap'd into the sea, Cleombrotus; and many more, too long, Embryos and idiots, eremites and friars White, black, and gray, with all their trumpery. Here pilgrims roam, that stray'd so far to seek In Golgotha him dead, who lives in heaven; And they, who, to be sure of Paradise, Dying put on the weeds of Dominic, Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised; They pass the planets seven, and pass the fix'd, And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs The trepidation talk'd, and that first moved; And now Saint Peter at heaven's wicket seems To wait them with his keys, and now at foot Of heaven's ascent they lift their feet, when, lo! A violent cross wind from either coast Blows them transverse, ten thousand leagues awry Into the devious air; then might ye see Cowls, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, tost And flutter'd into rags; then relics, beads, Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls, The sport of winds: all these, upwhirl'd aloft,

Fly o'er the backside of the world far off. Into a limbo large and broad, since call'd The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown Long after, now unpeopled, and untrod. All this dark globe the fiend found as he pass'd, And long he wander'd, till at last a gleam Of dawning light turn'd thitherward in haste His travell'd steps: far distant he descries, Ascending by degrees magnificent Up to the wall of heaven, a structure high; At top whereof, but far more rich, appear'd The work as of a kingly palace-gate, With frontispiece of diamond and gold Embellish'd; thick with sparkling orient gems The portal shone, inimitable on earth By model, or by shading pencil drawn. The stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw Angels ascending and descending, bands Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled To Padan-Aram, in the field of Luz. Dreaming by night under the open sky, And waking cried, "This is the gate of heaven." Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood There always, but drawn up to heaven sometimes Viewless; and underneath a bright sea flow'd Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon Who after came from earth, sailing arrived, Wafted by angels, or flew o'er the lake Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds. The stairs were then let down, whether to dare The fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss: Direct against which open'd from beneath, Just o'er the blissful seat of Paradise,

A passage down to the earth, a passage wide, Wider by far than that of after-times Over mount Sion, and, though that were large, Over the Promised Land, to God so dear; By which, to visit oft those happy tribes, On high behests his angels to and fro Pass'd frequent, and his eye with choice regard. From Paneas, the fount of Jordan's flood, To Beërsaba, where the Holy Land Borders on Egypt and the Arabian shore; So wide the opening seem'd, where bounds were set To darkness, such as bound the ocean wave, Satan from hence, now on the lower stair, That scaled by steps of gold to heaven-gate, Looks down with wonder at the sudden view Of all this world at once. As when a scout, Through dark and desert ways with peril gone All night, at last by break of cheerful dawn Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill, Which to his eye discovers unaware The goodly prospect of some foreign land First seen, or some renown'd metropolis, With glistering spires and pinnacles adorn'd, Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams; Such wonder seized, though after heaven seen, The spirit malign, but much more envy seized, At sight of all this world beheld so fair. Round he surveys (and well might, where he stood So high above the circling canopy Of night's extended shade), from eastern point Of Libra to the fleecy star that bears Andromeda far off Atlantic seas, Beyond the horizon; then from pole to pole He views in breadth, and without longer pause

Down right into the world's first region throws His flight precipitant, and winds, with ease, Through the pure marble air, his oblique way, Amongst innumerable stars, that shone Stars distant, but nigh hand seem'd other worlds; Or other worlds they seem'd, or happy isles, Like those Hesperian gardens famed of old, Fortunate fields, and groves, and flowery vales; Thrice happy isles! but who dwelt happy there He stay'd not to inquire: above them all, The golden sun, in splendour likest heaven, Allured his eye; thither his course he bends Through the calm firmament (but up or down, By centre or eccentric, hard to tell, Or longitude), where the great luminary, Aloof the vulgar constellations thick, That from his lordly eye keep distance due, Dispenses light from far: they, as they move Their starry dance in numbers that compute Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering lamp Turn swift their various motions, or are turn'd By his magnetic beam, that gently warms The universe, and to each inward part, With gentle penetration, though unseen, Shoots invisible virtue ev'n to the deep; So wondrously was set his station bright. There lands the fiend, a spot like which, perhaps, Astronomer in the sun's lucent orb. Through his glazed optic tube, yet never saw. The place he found beyond expression bright, Compared with aught on earth, metal or stone; Not all parts like, but all alike inform'd With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire; If metal, part seem'd gold, part silver clear:

If stone, carbuncle most or chrysolite, Ruby or topaz; or the twelve that shone In Aaron's breast-plate: and a stone besides, Imagined rather oft than elsewhere seen-That; stone, or like to that, which here below Philosophers in vain so long have sought In vain, though by their powerful art they bind Volatile Hermes, and call up unbound, In various shapes, old Proteus from the sea, Drain'd through a limber to his native form. What wonder, then, if fields and regions here Breathe forth elixir pure, and rivers run Potable gold, when, with one virtuous touch, The arch-chymic sun, so far from us remote, Produces, with terrestrial humour mix'd. Here in the dark so many precious things Of colour glorious, and effect so rare? Here matter new to gaze the devil met Undazzled; far and wide his eye commands; For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade, But all sunshine: as when his beams at noon Culminate from the equator, as they now Shot upward still direct, whence no way round Shadow from body opaque can fall; and the air, Nowhere so clear, sharpen'd his visual ray To objects distant far, whereby he soon Saw within ken a glorious angel stand, The same whom John saw also in the sun: His back was turn'd, but not his brightness hid; Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar Circled his head, nor less his locks behind, Illustrious, on his shoulders, fledge with wings, Lay waving round; on some great charge employ'd He seem'd, or fix'd in cogitation deep.

Glad was the spirit impure, as now in hope To find who might direct his wandering flight To Paradise, the happy seat of man, His journey's end, and our beginning woe. But first he casts to change his proper shape, Which else might work him danger or delay: And now a stripling cherub he appears, Not of the prime, yet such as in his face Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb Suitable grace diffused, so well he feign'd: Under a coronet his flowing hair, In curls on either cheek, play'd; wings he wore, Of many a colour'd plume, sprinkled with gold; His habit fit for speed succinct, and held Before his decent steps a silver wand. He drew not nigh unheard; the angel bright, Ere he drew nigh, his radiant visage turn'd, Admonish'd by his ear, and straight was known The archangel Uriel, one of the seven Who, in God's presence, nearest to his throne, Stand ready at command, and are his eyes That run through all the heavens, or down to the earth Bear his swift errands, over moist and dry, O'er sea and land: him Satan thus accosts:

"Uriel! for thou, of those seven spirits that stand In sight of God's high throne, gloriously bright, The first, art wont his great authentic will Interpreter through highest heaven to bring, Where all his sons thy embassy attend; And here art likeliest, by supreme decree, Like honour to obtain, and, as his eye, To visit oft this new creation round; Unspeakable desire to see, and know



All these his wondrous works, but chiefly man, His chief delight and favour—him for whom All these his works so wondrous he ordain'd, Hath brought me from the choirs of cherubim Alone thus wandering. Brightest seraph, tell In which of all these shining orbs hath man His fixed seat; or fixed seat hath none, But all these shining orbs his choice to dwell;

That I may find him, and with secret gaze,
Or open admiration, him behold
On whom the great Creator hath bestow'd
Worlds, and on whom hath all these graces pour'd;
That both in him and all things, as is meet,
The universal Maker we may praise,
Who justly hath driven out his rebel foes
To deepest hell, and, to repair that loss,
Created this new happy race of men
To serve him better: wise are all his ways."

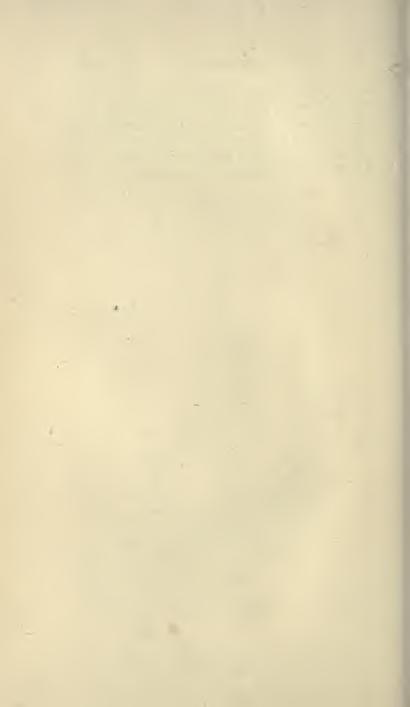
So spake the false dissembler unperceived;
For neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone,
By his permissive will, through heaven and earth:
And oft, though Wisdom wake, Suspicion sleeps
At Wisdom's gate, and to Simplicity
Resigns her charge, while Goodness thinks no ill
Where no ill seems: which now for once beguiled
Uriel, though regent of the sun, and held
The sharpest-sighted spirit of all in heaven;
Who to the fraudulent impostor foul,
In his uprightness, answer thus return'd:

"Fair angel, thy desire, which tends to know The works of God, thereby to glorify The great Work-master, leads to no excess That reaches blame, but rather merits praise The more it seems excess, that led thee hither From thy empyreal mansion thus alone, To witness with thine eyes what some, perhaps, Contented with report, hear only in heaven: For wonderful indeed are all his works! Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all

Had in remembrance always with delight. But what created mind can comprehend Their number, or the wisdom infinite That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep? I saw when, at his word, the formless mass, This world's material mould, came to a heap: Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar Stood ruled, stood vast infinitude confined; Till, at his second bidding, darkness fled, Light shone, and order from disorder sprung: Swift to their several quarters hasted then The cumbrous elements—earth, flood, air, fire; And this ethereal quintessence of heaven Flew upward, spirited with various forms, That roll'd orbicular, and turn'd to stars Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move; Each had his place appointed, each his course; The rest in circuit walls this universe. Look downward on that globe, whose hither side, With light from hence, though but reflected, shines; That place is earth, the seat of man; that light His day, which else, as the other hemisphere, Night would invade; but there the neighbouring moon (So call that opposite fair star) her aid Timely interposes, and her monthly round Still ending, still renewing, through mid heaven, With borrow'd light her countenance triform Hence fills and empties, to enlighten the earth, And in her pale dominion checks the night. That spot to which I point is Paradise, Adam's abode; those lofty shades, his bower. Thy way thou canst not miss, me mine requires." Thus said, he turn'd; and Satan, bowing low,

As to superior spirits is wont in heaven, Where honour due and reverence none neglects, Took leave, and toward the coast of earth beneath, Down from the ecliptic, sped with hoped success, Throws his steep flight in many an aëry wheel; Nor stay'd, till on Niphates' top he lights.



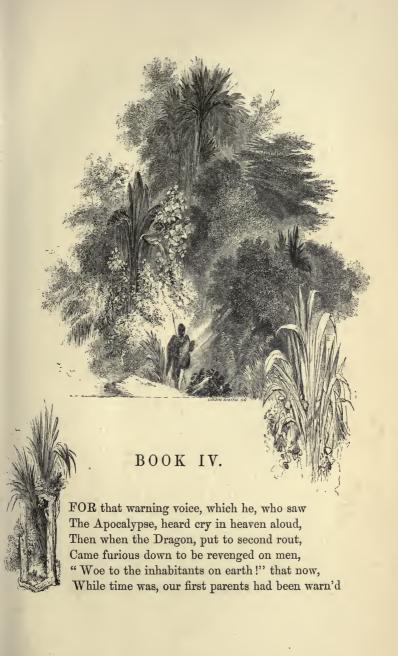


PARADISE LOST.

BOOK IV.

THE ARGUMENT.

Satan, now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprise which he undertook alone against God and man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions-fear, envy, and despair; but at length confirms himself in evil; journeys on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and situation are described; overleaps the bounds: sits, in the shape of a cormorant, on the tree of life, as the highest in the garden, to look about him. The garden described; Satan's first sight of Adam and Eve; his wonder at their excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work their fall; overhears their discourse, thence gathers that the tree of knowledge was forbidden them to eat of, under penalty of death; and thereon intends to found his temptation, by seducing them to transgress; then leaves them awhile to know further of their state by some other means. Meanwhile, Uriel, descending on a sunbeam, warns Gabriel, who had in charge the gate of Paradise, that some evil spirit had escaped the deep, and passed at noon by his sphere, in the shape of a good angel, down to Paradise. discovered after by his furious gestures in the mount. Gabriel promises to find him ere morning. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest; their bower described; their evening worship. Gabriel, drawing forth his bands of night-watch to walk the rounds of Paradise, appoints two strong angels to Adam's bower, lest the evil spirit should be there, doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping; there they find him at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel; by whom questioned, he scornfully answers; prepares resistance; but, hindered by a sign from heaven, flies out of Paradise.



The coming of their secret foe, and 'scaped, Haply so 'scaped his mortal snare: for now Satan, now first inflamed with rage, came down, The tempter, ere the accuser, of mankind, To wreak on innocent frail man his loss Of that first battle, and his flight to hell: Yet not rejoicing in his speed, though bold Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast, Begins his dire attempt; which, nigh the birth, Now rolling, boils in his tumultuous breast, And like a devilish engine back recoils Upon himself; horror and doubt distract His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir The hell within him; for within him hell He brings, and round about him, nor from hell One step, no more than from himself, can fly By change of place: now conscience wakes despair That slumber'd; wakes the bitter memory Of what he was, what is, and what must be, Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue. Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view Lay pleasant, his grieved look he fixes sad; Sometimes towards heaven and the full-blazing sun, Which now sat high in his meridian tower: Then, much revolving, thus in sighs began:

"O thou, that, with surpassing glory crown'd, Look'st from thy sole dominion, like the god Of this new world; at whose sight all the stars Hide their diminish'd heads; to thee I call, But with no friendly voice, and add thy name, O sun! to tell thee how I hate thy beams, That bring to my remembrance from what state I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere; Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,

Warring in heaven against heaven's matchless King: Ah, wherefore? he deserved no such return From me, whom he created what I was In that bright eminence, and with his good Upbraided none; nor was his service hard. What could be less than to afford him praise, The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks? How due! yet all his good proved ill in me, And wrought but malice; lifted up so high I 'sdain'd subjection, and thought one step higher Would set me highest, and in a moment quit The debt immense of endless gratitude, So burdensome; still paying, still to owe: Forgetful what from him I still received, And understood not that a grateful mind By owing owes not, but still pays, at once Indebted and discharged; what burden then? O had his powerful destiny ordain'd Me some inferior angel, I had stood Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised Ambition. Yet why not? some other power As great might have aspired, and me, though mean, Drawn to his part; but other powers as great Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within Or from without, to all temptations arm'd. Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand? Thou hadst: whom hast thou then, or what to accuse, But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all? Be then his love accursed, since love or hate, To me alike, it deals eternal woe. Nay, cursed be thou; since against his thy will Chose freely what it now so justly rues. Me miserable! which way shall I fly Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?

Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell; And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep Still threatening to devour me, opens wide, To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven. O, then, at last relent: is there no place Left for repentance, none for pardon left? None left but by submission; and that word Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame Among the spirits beneath, whom I seduced With other promises and other vaunts Than to submit, boasting I could subdue The Omnipotent. Ay, me! they little know How dearly I abide that boast so vain, Under what torments inwardly I groan, While they adore me on the throne of hell. With diadem and sceptre high advanced, The lower still I fall, only supreme In misery: such joy ambition finds. But say I could repent, and could obtain, By act of grace, my former state; how soon Would height recal high thoughts, how soon unsay What feign'd submission swore! Ease would recant Vows made in pain, as violent and void: For never can true reconcilement grow Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep: Which would but lead me to a worse relapse, And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear Short intermission, bought with double smart. This knows my Punisher; therefore, as far From granting he, as I from begging peace: All hope excluded thus, behold, instead Of us, outcast, exiled, his new delight, Mankind, created, and for him this world. So farewell hope; and with hope, farewell fear;

Farewell remorse: all good to me is lost; Evil be thou my good: by thee, at least, Divided empire with heaven's King I hold: By thee, and more than half, perhaps, will reign, As man, ere long, and this new world, shall know."

Thus while he spake, each passion dimm'd his face, Thrice changed with pale ire, envy, and despair; Which marr'd his borrow'd visage, and betray'd Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld: For heavenly minds from such distempers foul Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware, Each perturbation smooth'd with outward calm, Artificer of fraud; and was the first That practised falsehood under saintly show, Deep malice to conceal, couch'd with revenge: Yet not enough had practised to deceive Uriel once warn'd: whose eye pursued him down The way he went, and on the Assyrian mount Saw him disfigured, more than could befal Spirit of happy sort: his gestures fierce He mark'd, and mad demeanour, then alone, As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen. So on he fares, and to the border comes Of Eden, where delicious Paradise, Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green, As with a rural mound, the champaign head Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild, Access denied; and overhead up grew Insuperable height of loftiest shade, Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm, A sylvan scene; and, as the ranks ascend, Shade above shade, a woody theatre Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops

The verdurous wall of Paradise up-sprung: Which to our general sire gave prospect large Into his nether empire neighbouring round; And higher than that wall a circling row Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit, Blossoms and fruits at once, of golden hue, Appear'd, with gay enamell'd colours mix'd: On which the sun more glad impress'd his beams, Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow, When God hath shower'd the earth; so lovely seem'd That landscape: and of pure now purer air Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires Vernal delight and joy, able to drive All sadness but despair: now gentle gales, Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole Those balmy spoils. As when, to them who sail Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past Mozambique, off at sea north-east winds blow Sabean odours from the spicy shore Of Araby the Blest; with such delay Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league Cheer'd with the grateful smell, old Ocean smiles. So entertain'd those odorous sweets the fiend, Who came their bane: though with them better pleased Than Asmodeus with the fishy fume That drove him, though enamour'd, from the spouse Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound.

Now to the ascent of that steep savage hill Satan had journey'd on, pensive and slow; But further way found none, so thick intwined, As one continued brake, the undergrowth Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplex'd

All path of man or beast that pass'd that way. One gate there only was, and that look'd east On the other side; which, when the arch-felon saw, Due entrance he disdain'd; and, in contempt, At one slight bound high overleap'd all bound Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf, Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey, Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve. In hurdled cotes amid the field secure, Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold: Or as a thief bent to unhoard the cash Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors, Cross-barr'd and bolted fast, fear no assault. In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles: So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold; So since, into his church, lewd hirelings climb. Thence up he flew, and on the tree of life, The middle tree and highest there that grew, Sat like a cormorant; yet not true life Thereby regain'd, but sat devising death To them who lived; nor on the virtue thought Of that life-giving plant, but only used For prospect, what, well used, had been the pledge Of immortality. So little knows Any, but God alone, to value right The good before him, but perverts best things To worst abuse, or to their meanest use. Beneath him, with new wonder, now he views, To all delight of human sense exposed, In narrow room, Nature's whole wealth, yea, more; A heaven on earth: for blissful Paradise Of God the garden was, by him in the east Of Eden planted: Eden stretch'd her line VOL. I.

From Auran eastward to the royal towers Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings; Or where the sons of Eden long before Dwelt in Telassar: in this pleasant soil His far more pleasant garden God ordain'd: Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste; And all amid them stood the tree of life, High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit Of vegetable gold; and next to life, Our death, the tree of knowledge, grew fast by, Knowledge of good, bought dear by knowing ill. Southward through Eden went a river large, Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill Pass'd underneath, ingulf'd; for God had thrown That mountain as his garden mould, high raised Upon the rapid current, which through veins Of porous earth with kindly thirst up-drawn, Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill Water'd the garden; thence united fell Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood, Which from his darksome passage now appears; And now, divided into four main streams, Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm And country, whereof here needs no account; But rather to tell how, if art could tell, How from that sapphire fount the crisped brooks, Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold, With mazy error under pendent shades Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon Pour'd forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain, Both where the morning sun first warmly smote

The open field, and where the unpierced shade Imbrown'd the noontide bowers; thus was this place A happy rural seat of various view; Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm; Others whose fruit, burnish'd with golden rind, Hung amiable, Hesperian fables true, If true, here only, and of delicious taste: Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks Grazing the tender herb, were interposed; Or palmy hillock, or the flowery lap Of some irriguous valley spread her store, Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose: Another side, umbrageous grots and caves Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps Luxuriant; meanwhile murmuring waters fall Down the slope hills, dispersed, or in a lake, That to the fringed bank with myrtle crown'd Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams. The birds their choir apply; airs, vernal airs, Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune The trembling leaves, while universal Pan, Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance, Led on the eternal Spring. Not that fair field Of Enna, where Prosérpine gathering flowers, Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis Was gather'd, which cost Ceres all that pain To seek her through the world; nor that sweet grove Of Daphne by Orontes, and the inspired Castalian spring, might with this Paradise Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian isle, Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham, Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Lybian Jove, Hid Amalthea, and her florid son,

Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhea's eye; Nor where Abassin kings their issue guard. Mount Amara, though this by some supposed True Paradise, under the Ethiop line By Nilus' head, enclosed with shining rock, A whole day's journey high, but wide remote From this Assyrian garden, where the fiend Saw, undelighted, all delight, all kind Of living creatures, new to sight and strange. Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall, Godlike erect, with native honour clad, In naked majesty seem'd lords of all, And worthy seem'd; for in their looks divine The image of their glorious Maker shone. Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure (Severe, but in true filial freedom placed), Whence true authority in men; though both Not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd; For contemplation he, and valour, form'd; For softness she, and sweet attractive grace; He for God only, she for God in him: His fair large front and eye sublime declared Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks Round from his parted forelock manly hung Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad: She, as a veil, down to the slender waist, Her unadorned golden tresses wore Dishevell'd, but in wanton ringlets waved, As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied Subjection, but required with gentle sway, And by her yielded, by him best received, Yielded with coy submission, modest pride, And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay. Nor those mysterious parts were then conceal'd;

Then was not guilty shame; dishonest shame Of Nature's works, honour dishonourable, Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure, And banish'd from man's life his happiest life-Simplicity and spotless innocence! So pass'd they naked on, nor shunn'd the sight Of God or angel; for they thought no ill: So, hand in hand they pass'd, the loveliest pair That ever since in Love's embraces met; Adam the goodliest man of men since born His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve. Under a tuft of shade that on a green Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain side They sat them down; and, after no more toil Of their sweet gardening labour than sufficed To recommend cool zephyr, and make ease More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell, Nectarine fruits, which the compliant boughs Yielded them, sidelong as they sat reclined On the soft downy bank damask'd with flowers: The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind, Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream; Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems Fair couple, link'd in happy nuptial league, Alone as they. About them frisking play'd All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase In wood or wilderness, forest or den; Sporting the lion ramp'd, and in his paw Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards, Gamboll'd before them; the unwieldy elephant, To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed His lithe proboscis; close the serpent sly,
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
His braided train, and of his fatal guile
Gave proof unheeded: others on the grass
Couch'd, and, now fill'd with pasture, gazing sat,
Or bedward ruminating; for the sun,
Declined, was hasting now with prone career
To the ocean isles; and, in the ascending scale
Of heaven, the stars that usher evening rose;
When Satan, still in gaze, as first he stood,
Scarce thus at length fail'd speech recover'd sad:

"O hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold? Into our room of bliss thus high advanced Creatures of other mould, earth-born, perhaps, Not spirits, yet to heavenly spirits bright Little inferior; whom my thoughts pursue With wonder, and could love, so lively shines In them divine resemblance, and such grace The hand that form'd them on their shape hath pour'd. Ah! gentle pair, ye little think how nigh Your change approaches, when all these delights Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe; More woe, the more your taste is now of joy; Happy, but for so happy ill secured Long to continue, and this high seat, your heaven, Ill fenced, for heaven, to keep out such a foe As now is enter'd; yet no purposed foe To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn, Though I unpitied: league with you I seek, And mutual amity, so strait, so close, That I with you must dwell, or you with me Henceforth: my dwelling, haply, may not please, Like this fair Paradise, your sense; yet such Accept, your Maker's work; he gave it me,

Which I as freely give; hell shall unfold,
To entertain you two, her widest gates,
And send forth all her kings; there will be room,
Not like these narrow limits, to receive
Your numerous offspring; if no better place,
Thank him who puts me, loth, to this revenge
On you, who wrong me not, for him who wrong'd.
And should I at your harmless innocence
Melt, as I do, yet public reason just,
Honour and empire, with revenge enlarged,
By conquering this new world, compels me now
To do what else, though damn'd, I should abhor."

So spake the fiend, and with necessity. The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds. Then from his lofty stand, on that high tree, Down he alights among the sportful herd Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one, Now other, as their shape served best his end, Nearer to view his prey, and unespied, To mark what of their state he more might learn, By word or action mark'd: about them round A lion now he stalks with fiery glare; Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied In some purlieu two gentle fawns at play, Straight crouches close, then rising, changes oft His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground, Whence rushing he might surest seize them both, Griped in each paw; when Adam, first of men, To first of women, Eve, thus moving speech, Turn'd him, all ear to hear new utterance flow:

"Sole partner, and sole part of all these joys, Dearer thyself than all; needs must the Power That made us, and for us this ample world, Be infinitely good, and of his good As liberal, and free as infinite;
That raised us from the dust, and placed us here
In all this happiness; who at his hand
Have nothing merited, nor can perform
Aught whereof he hath need; he who requires
From us no other service than to keep
This one, this easy charge: of all the trees
In Paradise that bear delicious fruit



So various, not to taste that only tree Of knowledge, planted by the tree of life; So near grows death to life, whate'er death is, Some dreadful thing no doubt; for well thou know'st God hath pronounced it death to taste that tree, The only sign of our obedience left Among so many signs of power and rule Conferr'd upon us, and dominion given Over all other creatures that possess Earth, air, and sea. Then let us not think hard One easy prohibition, who enjoy Free leave so large to all things else, and choice Unlimited of manifold delights; But let us ever praise him, and extol His bounty; following our delightful task To prune these growing plants, and tend these flowers, Which, were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet."

To whom thus Eve replied: "O thou, for whom And from whom I was form'd, flesh of thy flesh, And without whom am to no end; my guide And head! what thou hast said is just and right. For we to him, indeed, all praises owe, And daily thanks; I chiefly, who enjoy So far the happier lot, enjoying thee Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou Like consort to thyself canst no where find. That day I oft remember, when from sleep I first awaked, and found myself reposed, Under a shade, on flowers, much wondering where And what I was, whence thither brought, and how. Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound Of waters issued from a cave, and spread Into a liquid plain, then stood unmoved,

Pure as the expanse of heaven; I thither went With unexperienced thought, and laid me down On the green bank, to look into the clear Smooth lake, that, to me, seem'd another sky. As I bent down to look, just opposite A shape within the watery gleam appear'd, Bending to look on me; I started back, It started back; but pleased I soon return'd, Pleased it return'd as soon with answering looks Of sympathy and love: there I had fix'd Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire, Had not a voice thus warned me: What thou seest. What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself; With thee it came and goes; but follow me, And I will bring thee where no shadow stays Thy coming, and thy soft embraces; he Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy Inseparably thine; to him shalt bear Multitudes like thyself, and thence be call'd Mother of human race. What could I do. But follow straight, invisibly thus led? Till I espied thee, fair, indeed, and tall, Under a plantane, yet methought less fair, Less winning soft, less amiably mild, Than that smooth watery image: back I turn'd; Thou, following, cry'dst aloud, Return, fair Eve; Whom fly'st thou? whom thou fly'st, of him thou art, His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart, Substantial life, to have thee by my side Henceforth an individual solace dear: Part of my soul, I seek thee, and thee claim, My other half. With that thy gentle hand

Seized mine: I yielded; and, from that time, see How beauty is excell'd by manly grace, And wisdom, which alone is truly fair."

So spake our general mother; and with eyes Of conjugal attraction unreproved,
And meek surrender, half-embracing lean'd On our first father; half her swelling breast
Naked met his, under the flowing gold
Of her loose tresses hid: he in delight
Both of her beauty and submissive charms,
Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
On Juno smiles, when he impregns the clouds
That shed May flowers; and press'd her matron lip
With kisses pure: aside the devil turn'd
For envy; yet with jealous leer malign
Eyed them askance, and to himself thus 'plain'd:

"Sight hateful, sight tormenting! thus these two, Imparadised in one another's arms, The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill Of bliss on bliss; while I to hell am thrust, Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire, Among our other torments not the least, Still unfulfill'd, with pain of longing pines. Yet let me not forget what I have gain'd From their own mouths; all is not theirs, it seems; One fatal tree there stands, of knowledge call'd, Forbidden them to taste. Knowledge forbidden? Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their Lord Envy them that? Can it be sin to know? Can it be death? And do they only stand By ignorance? Is that their happy state, The proof of their obedience and their faith? O fair foundation laid whereon to build Their ruin! Hence I will excite their minds

With more desire to know, and to reject
Envious commands, invented with design
To keep them low, whom knowledge might exalt
Equal with gods: aspiring to be such,
They taste and die; what likelier can ensue?
But first with narrow search I must walk round
This garden, and no corner leave unspied;
A chance but chance may lead where I may meet
Some wandering spirit of heaven by fountain side,
Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw
What further would be learn'd. Live while ye may,
Yet happy pair! enjoy, till I return,
Short pleasures; for long woes are to succeed."

So saying, his proud step he scornful turn'd, But with sly circumspection, and began Troam. Through wood, through waste, o'er hill, o'er dale, his Meanwhile, in utmost longitude, where heaven With earth and ocean meets, the setting sun Slowly descended, and with right aspect Against the eastern gate of Paradise Levell'd his evening rays; it was a rock Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds, Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent Accessible from earth, one entrance high; The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung Still as it rose, impossible to climb. Betwixt these rocky pillars Gabriel sat, Chief of the angelic guards, awaiting night; About him exercised heroic games The unarm'd youth of heaven, but nigh at hand Celestial armoury, shields, helms, and spears, Hung high, with diamond flaming, and with gold. Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star

In autumn thwarts the night, when vapours fired Impress the air, and shew the mariner From what point of his compass to beware Impetuous winds: he thus began in haste:

"Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot hath given Charge and strict watch, that to this happy place No evil thing approach or enter in.

This day at height of noon came to my sphere A spirit, zealous, as he seem'd, to know More of the Almighty's works, and chiefly man, God's latest image: I described his way Bent all on speed, and mark'd his aëry gait; But in the mount that lies from Eden north, Where he first lighted, soon discern'd his looks Alien from heaven, with passions foul obscured: Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade Lost sight of him: one of the banish'd crew, I fear, hath ventured from the deep to raise New troubles; him thy care must be to find."

To whom the winged warrior thus return'd:

"Uriel, no wonder if thy perfect sight,
Amid the sun's bright circle where thou sitt'st,
See far and wide: in at this gate none pass
The vigilance here placed, but such as come
Well known from heaven; and since meridian hour
No creature thence: if spirit of other sort,
So minded, have overleap'd these earthly bounds
On purpose, hard thou know'st it to exclude
Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.
But if within the circuit of these walks,
In whatsoever shape he lurk, of whom
Thou tell'st, by morrow dawning I shall know."

So promised he; and Uriel to his charge Return'd, on that bright beam, whose point now raised Bore him slope downward to the sun, now fallen Beneath the Azores; whether the prime orb, Incredible how swift, had thither roll'd Diurnal, or this less volúble earth, By shorter flight to the east, had left him there Arraying with reflected purple and gold The clouds that on his western throne attend.

Now came still evening on, and twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;
She all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence was pleased: now glow'd the firmament
With living sapphires: Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
Apparent queen, unveil'd her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

When Adam thus to Eve: "Fair consort, the hour Of night, and all things now retired to rest, Mind us of like repose; since God hath set Labour and rest, as day and night, to men Successive; and the timely dew of sleep, Now falling with soft slumb'rous weight, inclines Our eye-lids: other creatures all day long Rove idle, unemploy'd, and less need rest; Man hath his daily work of body or mind Appointed, which declares his dignity, And the regard of Heaven on all his ways; While other animals unactive range, And of their doings God takes no account. To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east With first approach of light, we must be risen,

And at our pleasant labour, to reform
Yon flowery arbours; yonder alleys green,
Our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,
That mock our scant manuring, and require
More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth:
Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums,
That lie bestrewn, unsightly and unsmooth,
Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease;
Meanwhile, as Nature wills, night bids us rest."

To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty 'dorn'd; "My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st Unargued I obey: so God ordains; God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more Is woman's happiest knowledge, and her praise. With thee conversing, I forget all time; All seasons, and their change, all please alike. Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet, With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the sun, When first on this delightful land he spreads His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower, Glistering with dew: fragrant the fertile earth After soft showers; and sweet the coming on Of grateful evening mild; then silent night, With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon, And these the gems of heaven, her starry train: But neither breath of morn, when she ascends With charm of earliest birds; nor rising sun On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower, Glistering with dew; nor fragrance after showers; Nor grateful evening mild; nor silent night, With this her solemn bird; nor walk by moon, Or glittering star-light, without thee is sweet. But wherefore all night long shine these? for whom This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?"

To whom our general ancestor replied: "Daughter of God and man, accomplish'd Eve, These have their course to finish round the earth By morrow evening, and from land to land In order, though to nations yet unborn, Ministering light prepared, they set and rise: Lest total darkness should by night regain Her old possession, and extinguish life In nature and all things; which these soft fires Not only enlighten, but, with kindly heat Of various influence, foment and warm, Temper or nourish, or in part shed down Their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow On earth, made hereby apter to receive Perfection from the sun's more potent ray. These, then, though unbeheld in deep of night, Shine not in vain. Nor think, though men were none, That heaven would want spectators, God want praise: Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep: All these with ceaseless praise his works behold Both day and night. How often from the steep Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard Celestial voices to the midnight air, Sole, or responsive each to other's note, Singing their great Creator! oft in bands While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk, With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds In full harmonic number join'd, their songs Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to heaven."

Thus talking, hand in hand alone they pass'd On to their blissful bower: it was a place Chosen by the sovereign Planter, when he framed All things to man's delightful use: the roof

Of thickest covert was inwoven shade, Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub, Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower. Iris all hues, roses, and jessamine, Rear'd high their flourish'd heads between, and wrought Mosaic; under foot the violet Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay Broider'd the ground, more colour'd than with stone Of costliest emblem: other creature here, Beast, bird, insect, or worm, durst enter none, Such was their awe of man. In shadier bower More sacred and sequester'd, though but feign'd, Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess, With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs, Espoused Eve deck'd first her nuptial bed; And heavenly choirs the hymenean sung, What day the genial angel to our sire Brought her, in naked beauty more adorn'd, More lovely than Pandora, whom the gods Endow'd with all their gifts; and, O! too like In sad event, when to the unwiser son Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.

Thus, at their shady lodge arrived, both stood, Both turn'd, and under open sky adored
The God that made both sky, air, earth, and heaven,
Which they beheld, the moon's resplendent globe,
And starry pole: "Thou also madest the night,
Maker Omnipotent, and thou the day,
Which we, in our appointed work employ'd,

Have finish'd, happy in our mutual help
And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss
Ordain'd by thee; and this delicious place
For us too large, where thy abundance wants
Partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground.
But thou hast promised from us two a race
To fill the earth, who shall with us extol
Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,
And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep."

This said unanimous, and other rites Observing none, but adoration pure, Which God likes best, into their inmost bower Handed they went; and, eased the putting off These troublesome disguises which we wear, Straight side by side were laid; nor turn'd, I ween. Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites Mysterious of connubial love refused: Whatever hypocrites austerely talk Of purity, and place, and innocence; Defaming as impure what God declares Pure, and commands to some-leaves free to all. Our Maker bids increase; who bids abstain But our destroyer, foe to God and man? Hail, wedded love, mysterious law, true source Of human offspring, sole propriety In Paradise, in all things common else! By thee adulterous lust was driven from men Among the bestial herds to range; by thee, Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure, Relations dear, and all the charities Of father, son, and brother, first were known. Far be it, that I should write thee sin or blame. Or think thee unbefitting holiest place, Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,

Whose bed is undefiled, and chaste pronounced, Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used. Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings, Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendear'd—Casual fruition; nor in court amours, Mix'd dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball, Or serenade, which the starved lover sings To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain. These, lull'd by nightingales, embracing slept, And on their naked limbs the flowery roof Shower'd roses, which the morn repair'd. Sleep on, Blest pair! and, O! yet happiest, if ye seek No happier state, and know to know no more.

Now had night measured, with her shadowy cone, Half way up hill this vast sublunar vault, And from their ivory port the cherubim, Forth issuing at the accustom'd hour, stood arm'd To their night-watches in warlike parade; When Gabriel to his next in power thus spake:

"Uzziel, half these draw off, and coast the south With strictest watch; these other wheel the north: Our circuit meets full west." As flame they part, Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear. From these, two strong and subtle spirits he call'd That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge:

"Ithuriel and Zephon, with wing'd speed
Search through this garden, leave unsearch'd no nook;
But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge,
Now laid, perhaps, asleep secure of harm.
This evening from the sun's decline arrived
Who tells of some infernal spirit seen
Hitherward bent (who could have thought?) escaped



The bars of hell, on errand bad, no doubt:
Such, where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring."
So saying, on he led his radiant files,
Dazzling the moon; these to the bower direct
In search of whom they sought; him there they found
Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,
Assaying by his devilish art to reach
The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
Illusions, as he list, phantasms and dreams;

Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint The animal spirits, that from pure blood arise Like gentle breaths from rivers pure, thence raise, At least, distemper'd, discontented thoughts, Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires, Blown up with high conceits engendering pride. Him, thus intent, Ithuriel with his spear Touch'd lightly; for no falsehood can endure Touch of celestial temper, but returns Of force to its own likeness: up he starts, Discover'd and surprised. As when a spark Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid Fit for the tun, some magazine to store Against a rumour'd war, the smutty grain, With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air; So started up, in his own shape, the fiend. Back stept those two fair angels, half amazed So sudden to behold the grisly king; Yet thus, unmov'd with fear, accost him soon:

"Which of those rebel spirits adjudged to hell Comest thou, escaped thy prison? and transform'd, Why satt'st thou like an enemy in wait, Here watching at the head of these that sleep?"

"Know ye not then," said Satan, fill'd with scorn:
"Know ye not me? ye knew me once, no mate
For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar,
Not to know me argues yourselves unknown,
The lowest of your throng; or, if ye know,
Why ask ye, and superfluous begin
Your message, like to end as much in vain?"

To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn with scorn: "Think not, revolted spirit, thy shape the same, Or undiminish'd brightness to be known, As when thou stood'st in heaven, upright and pure;

That glory then, when thou no more wast good, Departed from thee; and thou resemblest now, Thy sin and place of doom obscure and foul. But come; for thou, be sure, shalt give account To him who sent us, whose charge is to keep This place inviolable, and these from harm."

So spake the cherub; and his grave rebuke,
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible: abash'd the devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely; saw and pined
His loss; but chiefly to find here observed
His lustre visibly impair'd; yet seem'd
Undaunted. "If I must contend," said he,
"Best with the best, the sender not the sent,
Or all at once; more glory will be won,
Or less be lost." "Thy fear," said Zephon bold,
"Will save us trial what the least can do
Single against thee, wicked, and thence weak."

The fiend replied not, overcome with rage;
But, like a proud steed rein'd, went haughty on,
Champing his iron curb: to strive or fly
He held it vain; awe from above had quell'd
His heart, not else dismay'd. Now drew they nigh
The western point, where those half-rounding guards
Just met, and, closing, stood in squadron join'd,
Awaiting next command. To whom their chief,
Gabriel, from the front, thus call'd aloud:

"O friends! I hear the tread of nimble feet Hasting this way, and now by glimpse discern Ithuriel, and Zephon, through the shade; And with them comes a third of regal port, But faded splendour wan; who by his gait And fierce demeanour seems the prince of hell, Not likely to part hence without contest; Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours."

He scarce had ended, when those two approach'd, And brief related whom they brought, where found, How busied, in what form and posture couch'd.

To whom, with stern regard, thus Gabriel spake:
"Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds prescribed
To thy transgressions, and disturb'd the charge
Of others, who approve not to transgress
By thy example, but have power and right
To question thy bold entrance on this place;
Employ'd, it seems, to violate sleep, and those
Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss?"

To whom thus Satan, with contemptuous brow: "Gabriel, thou hadst in heaven the esteem of wise. And such I held thee: but this question ask'd Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain? Who would not, finding way, break loose from hell, Though thither doom'd? Thou wouldst thyself, no And boldly venture to whatever place Idoubt. Farthest from pain, where thou might'st hope to change Torment with ease, and soonest recompense Dole with delight, which in this place I sought: To thee no reason, who know'st only good, But evil hast not tried: and wilt object His will, who bound us? Let him surer bar His iron gates, if he intends our stay In that dark durance: thus much what was ask'd. The rest is true, they found me where they say; But that implies not violence or harm."

Thus he in scorn. The warlike angel moved, Disdainfully half smiling, thus replied: "O loss of one in heaven, to judge of wise, Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew,

And now returns him from his prison 'scaped, Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise Or not, who ask what boldness brought him hither, Unlicensed from his bounds in hell prescrib'd; So wise he judges it to fly from pain However, and to 'scape his punishment. So judge thou still, presumptuous! till the wrath, Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet thy flight Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to hell, Which taught thee yet no better, that no pain Can equal anger infinite provok'd. But wherefore thou alone? Wherefore with thee Came not all hell broke loose? Is pain to them Less pain, less to be fled? or thou than they Less hardy to endure? Courageous chief! The first in flight from pain! hadst thou alleged To thy deserted host this cause of flight, Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive."

To which the fiend thus answer'd, frowning stern: "Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain, Insulting angel! well thou know'st I stood The fiercest, when in battle to thy aid The blasting volley'd thunder made all speed, And seconded thy else not dreaded spear. But still thy words at random, as before, Argue thy inexperience, what behoves, From hard assays, and ill successes past, A faithful leader, not to hazard all Through ways of danger, by himself untried: I, therefore, I alone first undertook To wing the desolate abyss, and spy This new-created world, whereof in hell Fame is not silent, here in hope to find Better abode, and my afflicted powers

To settle here on earth, or in mid air; Though for possession put to try once more What thou and thy gay legions dare against; Whose easier business were to serve their Lord High up in heaven, with songs to hymn his throne, And practised distances to cringe, not fight."

To whom the warrior-angel soon replied: "To say and straight unsay, pretending first Wise to fly pain, professing next the spy, Argues no leader, but a liar traced, Satan: and couldst thou faithful add? O name, O sacred name of faithfulness profaned! Faithful to whom? to thy rebellious crew? Army of fiends, fit body to fit head. Was this your discipline and faith engaged, Your military obedience, to dissolve Allegiance to the acknowledged Power Supreme? And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem Patron of liberty, who more than thou Once fawn'd, and cringed, and servilely adored Heaven's awful Monarch? wherefore, but in hope To dispossess him, and thyself to reign? But mark what I arreed thee now-Avaunt; Fly thither whence thou fled'st. If from this hour Within these hallow'd limits thou appear, Back to the infernal pit I drag thee chain'd, And seal thee so, as henceforth not to scorn The facile gates of hell too slightly barr'd."

So threaten'd he; but Satan to no threats Gave heed, but, waxing more in rage, replied:

"Then, when I am thy captive, talk of chains, Proud limitary cherub! but ere then Far heavier load thyself expect to feel From my prevailing arm, though heaven's King

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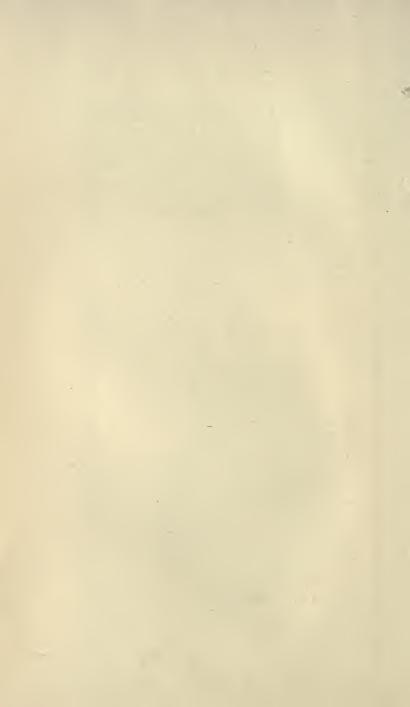
Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy compeers, Used to the yoke, draw'st his triumphant wheels In progress through the road of heaven star-paved."

While thus he spake, the angelic squadron bright Turn'd fiery red, sharp'ning in mooned horns Their phalanx, and began to hem him round With ported spears, as thick as when a field Of Ceres, ripe for harvest, waving bends Her bearded grove of ears, which way the wind Sways them; the careful ploughman doubting stands, Lest on the thrashing-floor his hopeful sheaves Prove chaff. On the other side, Satan, alarm'd, Collecting all his might, dilated stood, Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved: His stature reach'd the sky, and on his crest Sat horror plumed; nor wanted in his grasp What seem'd both spear and shield. Now dreadful Might have ensued; nor only Paradise, [deeds In this commotion, but the starry cope Of heaven, perhaps, or all the elements At least had gone to wrack, disturb'd and torn With violence of this conflict, had not soon The Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray, Hung forth in heaven his golden scales, yet seen Betwixt Astrea and the Scorpion sign, Wherein all things created first he weigh'd, The pendulous round earth with balanced air In counterpoise; now ponders all events, Battles and realms: in these he put two weights, The sequel each of parting and of fight: The latter quick up flew, and kick'd the beam; Which Gabriel spying, thus bespake the fiend: "Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know'st mine;

Neither our own, but given; what folly then

To boast what arms can do! since thine no more Than Heaven permits, nor mine, though doubled now To trample thee as mire: for proof look up, And read thy lot in yon celestial sign, Where thou art weigh'd, and shown how light, how weak If thou resist." The fiend look'd up, and knew His mounted scale aloft: nor more; but fled Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night.



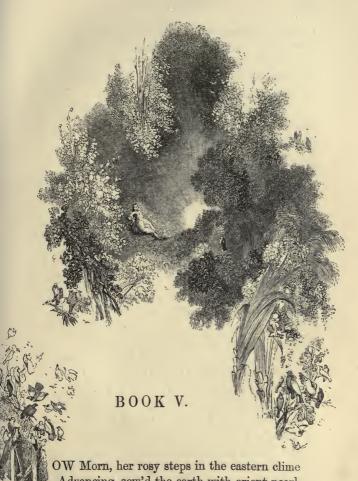


PARADISE LOST.

BOOK V.

THE ARGUMENT.

Morning approached, Eve relates to Adam her troublesome dream; he likes it not, yet comforts her; they come forth to their day labours; their morning hymn at the door of their bower. God, to render man inexcusable, sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand, who he is, and why his enemy, and whatever else may avail Adam to know. Raphael comes down to Paradise; his appearance described; his coming discerned by Adam afar off, sitting at the door of his bower; he goes out to meet him, brings him to his lodge, entertains him with the choicest fruits of Paradise, got together by Eve; their discourse at table: Raphael performs his message, minds Adam of his state and of his enemy; relates, at Adam's request, who that enemy is, and how he came to be so, be drew his legions after him to the parts of the north, and there incited them to rebel with him, persuading all but only Abdiel, a seraph, who in argument dissuades and opposes him, then forsakes him.



OW Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl, When Adam waked, so custom'd: for his sleep Was aëry-light, from pure digestion bred, And temperate vapours bland, which the only sound Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,

Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song Of birds on every bough; so much the more His wonder was to find unwaken'd Eve With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek, As through unquiet rest: he, on his side Leaning, half raised, with looks of cordial love Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld Beauty which, whether waking or asleep, Shot forth peculiar graces; then with voice Mild as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes, Her hand soft touching, whisper'd thus: "Awake, My fairest, my espoused, my latest found, Heaven's last, best gift, my ever-new delight! Awake: the morning shines, and the fresh field Calls us; we lose the prime to mark how spring Our tender plants, how blows the citron grove, What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed; How Nature paints her colours, how the bee Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid sweet."

Such whispering waked her, but with startled eye On Adam, whom embracing, thus she spake:

"O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
My glory, my perfection! glad I see
Thy face and morn return'd; for I this night
(Such night till this I never pass'd) have dream'd,
If dream'd, not, as I oft am wont, of thee,
Works of day past, or morrow's next design;
But of offence and trouble, which my mind
Knew never till this irksome night. Methought
Close at mine ear one call'd me forth to walk
With gentle voice; I thought it thine: it said,
Why sleep'st thou, Eve? now is the pleasant time,
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
To the night-warbling bird that, now awake,

Tunes sweetest his love-labour'd song; now reigns Full orb'd the moon, and, with more pleasing light, Shadowy sets off the face of things; in vain, If none regard; Heaven wakes with all his eyes, Whom to behold but thee, Nature's desire? In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze. I rose as at thy call, but found thee not: To find thee I directed then my walk; And on, methought, alone I pass'd through ways That brought me on a sudden to the tree Of interdicted knowledge; fair it seem'd, Much fairer to my fancy than by day; And, as I wondering look'd, beside it stood One shaped and wing'd like one of those from heaven By us oft seen: his dewy locks distill'd Ambrosia: on that tree he also gazed; 'And, O, fair plant,' said he, 'with fruit surcharged, Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet, Nor God nor man? Is knowledge so despised? Or envy, or what reserve forbids to taste? Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold Longer thy offer'd good; why else set here?' This said, he paused not, but with venturous arm He pluck'd, he tasted; me damp horror chill'd At such bold words youch'd with a deed so bold: But he thus, overjoy'd; 'O fruit divine, Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropt, Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit For gods, yet able to make gods of men; And why not gods of men; since good, the more Communicated, more abundant grows. The Author not impair'd, but honour'd more? VOL. T.

Here, happy creature, fair angelic Eve! Partake thou also: happy though thou art, Happier thou may'st be, worthier canst not be: Taste this, and be henceforth among the gods Thyself a goddess, not to earth confined, But sometimes in the air, as we: sometimes Ascend to heaven, by merit thine, and see What life the gods live there, and such live thou.' So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held, Even to my mouth of that same fruit held part Which he had pluck'd: the pleasant savoury smell So quicken'd appetite that I, methought, Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds With him I flew, and underneath beheld The earth outstretch'd immense, a prospect wide And various: wondering at my flight and change To this high exaltation; suddenly My guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down, And fell asleep; but, O, how glad I waked To find this but a dream." Thus Eve her night Related, and thus Adam answer'd sad:

"Best image of myself, and dearer half,
The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep
Affects me equally; nor can I like
This uncouth dream, of evil sprung, I fear,
Yet evil whence? in thee can harbour none,
Created pure. But know that, in the soul,
Are many lesser faculties, that serve
Reason as chief; among these, Fancy next
Her office holds; of all external things,
Which the five watchful senses represent,
She forms imaginations, aery shapes,
Which Reason, joining or disjoining, frames
All what we affirm or what deny, and call

Our knowledge or opinion; then retires Into her private cell, when Nature rests. Oft, in her absence, mimic Fancy wakes To imitate her; but misjoining shapes, Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams; Ill matching words and deeds long past or late. Some such resemblances, methinks, I find Of our last evening's talk, in this thy dream, But with addition strange; yet be not sad. Evil into the mind of God or man May come and go, so unapproved, and leave No spot or blame behind; which gives me hope That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream, Waking thou never wilt consent to do. Be not dishearten'd, then, nor cloud those looks, That wont to be more cheerful and serene Than when fair morning first smiles on the world, And let us to our fresh employments rise Among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers, That open now their choicest bosom'd smells, Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store."

So cheer'd he his fair spouse, and she was cheer'd; But silently a gentle tear let fall
From either eye, and wiped them with her hair;
Two other precious drops that ready stood,
Each in their crystal sluice, he, ere they fell,
Kiss'd, as the gracious signs of sweet remorse
And pious awe, that fear'd to have offended.

So all was clear'd, and to the field they haste. But first from under shady arborous roof,
Soon as they forth were come to open sight
Of day-spring, and the sun, who, scarce up risen,
With wheels yet hovering o'er the ocean-brim,
Shot parallel to the earth his dewy ray,

Discovering in wide landscape all the east
Of Paradise, and Eden's happy plains,
Lowly they bow'd adoring, and began
Their orisons, each morning duly paid
In various style; for neither various style
Nor holy rapture wanted they, to praise
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced, or sung
Unmeditated; such prompt eloquence
Flow'd from their lips, in prose or numerous verse;
More tuneable than needed lute or harp
To add more sweetness; and they thus began:

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of good, Almighty! thine this universal frame, Thus wondrous fair: thyself how wondrous then, Unspeakable! who sitt'st above these heavens To us invisible, or dimly seen In these thy lowest works; yet these declare Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine. Speak, ye who best can tell, ye sons of light, Angels: for ye behold him, and with songs And choral symphonies, day without night Circle his throne rejoicing; ye in heaven, On earth join all ye creatures to extol Him first, him last, him midst, and without end. Fairest of stars, last in the train of night, If better thou belong not to the dawn, Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn With thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere, While day arises, that sweet hour of prime. Thou sun, of this great world both eye and soul, Acknowledge him thy greater; sound his praise In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st And when high noon hast gain'd, and when thou fall'st. Moon, that now meet'st the orient sun, now fly'st,

With the fix'd stars, fix'd in their orb that flies; And ve five other wandering fires, that move In mystic dance not without song, resound His praise, who out of darkness call'd up light. Air, and ye elements, the eldest birth Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run Perpetual circle, multiform; and mix And nourish all things; let your ceaseless change Vary to our great Maker still new praise. Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise From hill or streaming lake, dusky or gray, Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold, In honour to the world's great Author rise; Whether to deck with clouds the uncolour'd sky, Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers, Rising or falling, still advance his praise. His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow, Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines, With every plant, in sign of worship wave. Fountains, and ye that warble as ye flow, Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise. Join voices, all ye living souls: ye birds, That, singing, up to heaven-gate ascend, Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.' Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep; Witness if I be silent, morn or even, To hill or valley, fountain or fresh shade, Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise. Hail, universal Lord! be bounteous still To give us only good; and if the night Have gather'd aught of evil, or conceal'd, Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark." So pray'd they innocent, and to their thoughts

Firm peace recover'd soon, and wonted calm. On to their morning's rural work they haste, Among sweet dews and flowers, where any row Of fruit-trees, over woody, reach'd too far Their pamper'd boughs, and needed hands to check Fruitless embraces: or they led the vine To wed her elm; she, spoused, about him twines Her marriageable arms, and with her brings Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn His barren leaves. Them thus employ'd beheld With pity Heaven's high King, and to him call'd Raphael, the sociable spirit, that deign'd To travel with Tobias, and secured His marriage with the seven-times-wedded maid.

"Raphael," said he, "thou hear'st what stir on earth Satan, from hell 'scaped through the darksome gulf, Hath raised in Paradise; and how disturb'd This night the human pair; how he designs In them at once to ruin all mankind. Go, therefore, half this day, as friend with friend, Converse with Adam, in what bower or shade Thou find'st him from the heat of noon retired, To respite his day-labour with repast, Or with repose; and such discourse bring on, As may advise him of his happy state; Happiness in his power left free to will, Left to his own free will, his will though free Yet mutable; whence warn him to beware He swerve not, too secure: tell him withal His danger, and from whom; what enemy, Late fallen himself from heaven, is plotting now The fall of others from like state of bliss; By violence? no, for that shall be withstood; But by deceit and lies: this let him know,

Lest, wilfully transgressing, he pretend Surprisal, unadmonish'd, unforewarn'd.''

So spake the Eternal Father, and fulfill'd All justice: nor delay'd the winged saint After his charge received; but from among Thousand celestial ardours, where he stood Veil'd with his gorgeous wings, up springing light, Flew through the midst of heaven; the angelic choirs, On each hand parting, to his speed gave way Through all the empyreal road: till, at the gate Of heaven arrived, the gate self-open'd wide On golden hinges turning, as by work Divine the sov'reign Architect had framed. From hence no cloud, or, to obstruct his sight, Star interposed, however small, he sees, Not unconform to other shining globes, Earth, and the garden of God, with cedars crown'd Above all hills. As when by night the glass Of Galileo, less assured, observes Imagined lands and regions in the moon: Or pilot, from amidst the Cyclades, Delos, or Samos, first appearing, kens A cloudy spot. Down thither prone in flight He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing, Now on the polar winds, then with quick fan Winnows the buxom air; till, within soar Of towering eagles, to all the fowls he seems A Phœnix, gazed by all, as that sole bird, When, to enshrine his relics in the sun's Bright temple, to Egyptian Thebes he flies. At once on the eastern cliff of Paradise He lights; and to his proper shape returns A seraph wing'd: six wings he wore, to shade

His lineaments divine; the pair that clad Each shoulder broad, came mantling o'er his breast With regal ornament; the middle pair Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold, And colours dipt in heaven; the third his feet Shadow'd from either heel with feather'd mail, Sky-tinctured grain. Like Maia's son he stood, And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance fill'd The circuit wide. Straight knew him all the bands Of angels under watch: and to his state, And to his message high, in honour rise; For on some message high they guess'd him bound. Their glittering tents he pass'd, and now is come Into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh, And flowering odours, cassia, nard, and balm; A wilderness of sweets! for Nature here Wanton'd as in her prime, and play'd at will Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet, Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss. Him through the spicy forest onward come Adam discern'd, as in the door he sat Of his cool bower, while now the mounted sun Shot down direct his fervid rays, to warm Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs; And Eve, within, due at her hour, prepared For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please True appetite, and not disrelish thirst Of nectareous draughts between, from milky stream, Berry or grape: to whom thus Adam call'd:

"Haste hither, Eve, and, worth thy sight, behold, Eastward, among those trees, what glorious shape Comes this way moving; seems another morn Ris'n on mid-noon; some great behest from Heaven To us, perhaps, he brings, and will vouchsafe
This day to be our guest. But go with speed,
And, what thy stores contain, bring forth, and pour
Abundance, fit to honour and receive
Our heavenly stranger; well we may afford
Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow
From large bestow'd, where Nature multiplies
Her fertile growth, and by disburdening grows
More fruitful, which instructs us not to spare."

To whom thus Eve: "Adam, earth's hallow'd mould, Of God inspired, small store will serve, where store, All seasons, ripe for use, hangs on the stalk; Save what, by frugal storing, firmness gains
To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes:
But I will haste, and from each bough and brake, Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such choice To entertain our angel-guest, as he, Beholding, shall confess, that here on earth God hath dispensed his bounties as in heaven."

So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent
What choice to choose for delicacy best,
What order, so contrived as not to mix
Tastes not well join'd, inelegant, but bring
Taste after taste upheld with kindliest change:
Bestirs her then, and from each tender stalk
Whatever earth, all-bearing mother, yields
In India East or West, or middle shore
In Pontus or the Punic coast, or where
Alcinöus reign'd; fruit of all kinds, in coat
Rough, or smooth rind, or bearded husk, or shell,
She gathers; tribute large! and on the board
Heaps with unsparing hand; for drink, the grape
She crushes, inoffensive must, and meathes

From many a berry; and from sweet kernels press'd She tempers dulcet creams; nor these to hold Wants her fit vessels pure; then strews the ground With rose and odours from the shrub unfumed.

Meanwhile our primitive great sire, to meet His godlike guest, walks forth, without more train Accompanied than with his own complete Perfections; in himself was all his state, More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits On princes, when their rich retinue long Of horses led, and grooms besmear'd with gold. Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all agape. Nearer his presence, Adam, though not awed, Yet with submiss approach and reverence meek, As to a superior nature, bowing low, Thus said: "Native of heaven, for other place None can than heaven such glorious shape contain: Since by descending from the thrones above, Those happy places thou hast deign'd awhile To want, and honour these; vouchsafe with us Two only, who yet by sovereign gift possess This spacious ground, in yonder shady bower To rest; and, what the garden choicest bears, To sit and taste, till this meridian heat Be over, and the sun more cool decline."

Whom thus the angelic Virtue answer'd mild:
"Adam, I therefore came; nor art thou such
Created, or such place hast here to dwell,
As may not oft invite, though spirits of heaven,
To visit thee: lead on, then, where thy bower
O'ershades; for these mid hours, till evening rise,
I have at will." So to the sylvan lodge
They came, that like Pomona's arbour smiled,
With flow'rets deck'd, and fragrant smells; but Eve,

Undeck'd, save with herself, more lovely fair Than wood nymph, or the fairest goddess feign'd Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove, Stood to entertain her guest from heaven; no veil She needed, virtue proof; no thought infirm Alter'd her cheek. On whom the angel "Hail!" Bestow'd, the holy salutation used, Long after, to blest Mary, second Eve:

"Hail! mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb



Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons,
Than with these various fruits the trees of God
Have heap'd this table." Raised of grassy turf
Their table was, and mossy seats had round,
And on her ample square, from side to side,
All autumn piled, though spring and autumn here
Danced hand in hand. Awhile discourse they hold;
No fear lest dinner cool; when thus began
Our author: "Heavenly stranger, please to taste
These bounties, which our Nourisher, from whom
All perfect good, unmeasured out, descends,
To us for food and for delight hath caused
The earth to yield: unsavoury food, perhaps,
To spiritual natures; only this I know,
That one celestial Father gives to all."

To whom the angel: "Therefore, what he gives (Whose praise be ever sung) to man, in part Spiritual, may of purest spirits be found No ingrateful food: and food alike those pure, Intelligential substances require, As doth your rational: and both contain Within them every lower faculty Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste; Tasting, concoct, digest, assimilate, And corporeal to incorporeal turn. For know, whatever was created, needs To be sustain'd and fed: of elements The grosser feeds the purer; earth the sea; Earth and the sea feed air: the air those fires Ethereal, and as lowest, first the moon; Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurged Vapours not yet into her substance turn'd. Nor doth the moon no nourishment exhale From her moist continent to higher orbs.

The sun, that light imparts to all, receives From all his alimental recompense In humid exhalations, and at even Sups with the ocean. Though in heaven the trees Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines Yield nectar; though from off the boughs, each morn, We brush mellifluous dews, and find the ground Cover'd with pearly grain; yet God hath here Varied his bounty so, with new delights, As may compare with heaven; and to taste Think not I shall be nice." So down they sat, And to their viands fell; nor seemingly The angel, nor in mist-the common gloss Of theologians; but with keen dispatch Of real hunger, and concoctive heat To transubstantiate: what redounds, transpires Through spirits with ease; nor wonder, if by fire Of sooty coal the empiric alchymist Can turn, or holds it possible to turn, Metals of drossiest ore to perfect gold, As from the mine. Meanwhile, at table, Eve Minister'd naked, and their flowing cups With pleasant liquors crown'd: O innocence, Deserving Paradise! if ever, then, Then had the sons of God excuse to have been Enamour'd at that sight; but in those hearts Love unlibidinous reign'd, nor jealousy Was understood, the injured lover's hell.

Thus, when with meats and drinks they had sufficed, Not burden'd nature, sudden mind arose In Adam, not to let the occasion pass, Given him by this great conference, to know Of things above his world, and of their being Who dwell in heaven, whose excellence he saw

Transcend his own so far; whose radiant forms, Divine effulgence, whose high power, so far Exceeded human; and his wary speech Thus to the empyreal minister he framed:

"Inhabitant with God, now know I well
Thy favour, in this honour done to man;
Under whose lowly roof thou hast vouchsafed
To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,
Food not of angels, yet accepted so,
As that more willingly thou couldst not seem
At heaven's high feasts to have fed: yet what compare?"

To whom the winged hierarch replied: "O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom All things proceed, and up to him return, If not depraved from good, created all Such to perfection, one first matter all, Endued with various forms, various degrees Of substance, and, in things that live, of life; But more refined, more spirituous, and pure, As nearer to him placed, or nearer tending, Each in their several active spheres assign'd, Till body up to spirit work, in bounds Proportion'd to each kind. So from the root Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves More aëry, last the bright consummate flower Spirits odorous breathes: flowers and their fruit. Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed, To vital spirits aspire, to animal, To intellectual; give both life and sense, Fancy and understanding; whence the soul Reason receives, and reason is her being, Discursive, or intuitive; discourse Is oftest yours, the latter most is ours, Differing but in degree, of kind the same.

Wonder not, then, what God for you saw good
If I refuse not, but convert, as you,
To proper substance. Time may come, when men
With angels may participate, and find
No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare;
And from these corporal nutriments, perhaps,
Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
Improved by tract of time, and wing'd ascend,
Ethereal, as we; or may, at choice,
Here or in heavenly paradises dwell,
If ye be found obedient, and retain,
Unalterably firm, his love entire,
Whose progeny you are. Meanwhile enjoy
Your fill, what happiness this happy state
Can comprehend, incapable of more."

To whom the patriarch of mankind replied:
"O favourable spirit, propitious guest,
Well hast thou taught the way that might direct
Our knowledge, and the scale of nature set
From centre to circumference; whereon,
In contemplation of created things,
By steps we may ascend to God. But say,
What meant that caution join'd, 'If ye be found
Obedient?' Can we want obedience, then,
To him, or possibly his love desert,
Who form'd us from the dust, and placed us here,
Full to the utmost measure of what bliss
Human desires can seek or apprehend?"

To whom the angel: "Son of heaven and earth, Attend: that thou art happy, owe to God; That thou continuest such, owe to thyself, That is, to thy obedience; therein stand. This was that caution given thee; be advised. God made thee perfect, not immutable;

And good he made thee; but to persevere He left it in thy power; ordain'd thy will By nature free, not over-ruled by fate Inextricable, or strict necessity: Our voluntary service he requires, Not our necessitated: such with him Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how Can hearts, not free, be tried whether they serve Willing or no, who will but what they must By destiny, and can no other choose? Myself, and all the angelic host, that stand In sight of God, enthroned, our happy state Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds; On other surety none: freely we serve, Because we freely love, as in our will To love or not; in this we stand or fall: And some are fall'n, to disobedience fall'n, And so from heaven to deepest hell: O fall, From what high state of bliss, into what woe!"

To whom our great progenitor: "Thy words
Attentive, and with more delighted ear,
Divine instructor, I have heard, than when
Cherubic songs, by night, from neighbouring hills
Aërial music send: nor knew I not
To be, both will and deed, created free;
Yet that we never shall forget to love
Our Maker, and obey him whose command
Single is yet so just, my constant thoughts
Assured me, and still assure: though what thou tell'st
Hath pass'd in heaven, some doubt within me move,
But more desire to hear, if thou consent,
The full relation, which must needs be strange,
Worthy of sacred silence to be heard;
And we have yet large day, for scarce the sun

Hath finish'd half his journey, and scarce begins His other half in the great zone of heaven."

Thus Adam made request: and Raphael, After short pause assenting, thus began:

"High matter thou enjoin'st me, O prime of men, Sad task and hard: for how shall I relate
To human sense the invisible exploits
Of warring spirits? how, without remorse,
The ruin of so many, glorious once,
And perfect, while they stood? how, last, unfold
The secrets of another world, perhaps
Not lawful to reveal? yet for thy good
This is dispensed; and what surmounts the reach
Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
By likening spiritual to corporal forms,
As may express them best; though what if earth
Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein
Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?

"As yet this world was not, and Chaos wild Reign'd where these heavens now roll, where earth now Upon her centre poised; when on a day Trests, (For time, though in eternity, applied To motion, measures all things durable By present, past, and future), on such day As heaven's great year brings forth, the empyreal host Of angels, by imperial summons call'd, Innumerable, before the Almighty's throne, Forthwith, from all the ends of heaven, appear'd Under their hierarchs in orders bright: Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced, Standards and gonfalons 'twixt van and rear Stream in the air, and for distinction serve Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees; Or in their glittering tissues bear emblazed

Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love Recorded eminent. Thus, when in orbs Of circuit inexpressible they stood, Orb within orb, the Father infinite, By whom, in bliss embosom'd, sat the Son, Amidst, as from a flaming mount, whose top Brightness had made invisible, thus spake:

"'Hear, all ye angels, progeny of light, Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers; Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand. This day I have begot whom I declare My only Son, and on this holy hill Him have anointed, whom ye now behold At my right hand; your head I him appoint; And by myself have sworn, to him shall bow All knees in heaven, and shall confess him Lord: Under his great vicegerent reign abide United, as one individual soul, For ever happy: him who disobeys, Me disobeys, breaks union; and that day, Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls Into utter darkness, deep engulf'd, his place Ordain'd without redemption, without end.'

"So spake the Omnipotent, and with his words
All seem'd well pleased; all seem'd, but were not all.
That day, as other solemn days, they spent
In song and dance about the sacred hill;
Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere
Of planets, and of fix'd, in all her wheels
Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular
Then most, when most irregular they seem;
And in their motions harmony divine
So smoothes her charming tones, that God's own ear

Listens delighted. Evening now approach'd (For we have also our evening and our morn, We ours for change delectable, not need); Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn Desirous; all in circles as they stood, Tables are set, and on a sudden piled With angels' food; and rubied nectar flows In pearl, in diamond, and massy gold, Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of heaven. On flowers reposed, and with fresh flow'rets crown'd, They eat, they drink; and in communion sweet Quaff immortality and joy, secure Of surfeit, where full measure only bounds Excess, before the all-bounteous King, who shower'd With copious hand, rejoicing in their joy. Now when ambrosial night, with clouds exhaled From that high mount of God, whence light and shade Spring both, the face of brightest heaven had changed To grateful twilight (for night comes not there In darker veil), and roseate dews disposed All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest; Wide over all the plain, and wider far Than all this globous earth in plain outspread (Such are the courts of God), the angelic throng, Dispersed in bands and files, their camp extend By living streams among the trees of life, Pavilions numberless, and sudden rear'd, Celestial tabernacles, where they slept, Fann'd with cool winds; save those, who, in their course, Melodious hymns about the sovereign throne Alternate all night long: but not so waked Satan; so call him now, his former name Is heard no more in heaven; he of the first, If not the first archangel, great in power,

In favour and pre-eminence, yet fraught
With envy against the Son of God, that day
Honour'd by his great Father, and proclaim'd
Messiah King anointed, could not bear,
Through pride, that sight, and thought himself impair'd.
Deep malice thence conceiving, and disdain,
Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour
Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolved
With all his legions to dislodge, and leave
Unworshipp'd, unobey'd, the throne supreme,
Contemptuous; and his next subordinate
Awakening, thus to him in secret spake:

"'Sleep'st thou, companion dear? What sleep can Thy eyelids? and remember'st what decree Of yesterday, so late hath pass'd the lips Of heaven's Almighty? Thou to me thy thoughts Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont to impart; Both waking we were one; how, then, can now Thy sleep dissent? New laws thou seest imposed; New laws from him who reigns, new minds may raise In us who serve; new_counsels, to debate What doubtful may ensue: more in this place To utter is not safe. Assemble thou, Of all those myriads which we lead, the chief; Tell them that, by command, ere yet dim night Her shadowy clouds withdraws, I am to haste, And all who under me their banners wave, Homeward, with flying march, where we possess The quarters of the north; there to prepare Fit entertainment to receive our King, The great Messiah, and his new commands; Who speedily, through all the hierarchies, Intends to pass triumphant, and give laws.'

"So spake the false archangel, and infused



Bad influence into the unwary breast
Of his associate: he together calls,
Or several one by one, the regent powers,
Under him regent; tells, as he was taught,
That the Most High commanding, now ere night,
Now ere dim night had disencumber'd heaven,
The great hierarchal standard was to move;
Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
Ambiguous words, and jealousies, to sound
Or taint integrity: but all obey'd

The wonted signal, and superior voice,
Of their great potentate; for great, indeed,
His name, and high was his degree in heaven:
His countenance, as the morning-star that guides
The starry flock, allured them, and with lies
Drew after him the third part of heaven's host.
Meanwhile, the Eternal eye, whose sight discerns
Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy mount,
And from within the golden lamps that burn
Nightly before him, saw without their light
Rebellion rising, saw in whom, how spread
Among the sons of morn, what multitudes
Were banded to oppose his high decree;
And, smiling, to his only Son thus said:

""Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
In full resplendence, heir of all my might,
Nearly it now concerns us to be sure
Of our omnipotence, and with what arms
We mean to hold what anciently we claim
Of deity or empire: such a foe
Is rising, who intends to erect his throne
Equal to ours, throughout the spacious north;
Nor so content, hath in his thought to try,
In battle, what our power is, or our right.
Let us advise, and to this hazard draw
With speed what force is left, and all employ
In our defence, lest unawares we lose
This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill.'

"To whom the Son, with calm aspect and clear, Lightning divine, ineffable, serene, Made answer: 'Mighty Father, thou thy foes Justly hast in derision, and, secure, Laugh'st at their vain designs and tumults vain; Matter to me of glory, whom their hate Illustrates, when they see all regal power Given me to quell their pride, and in event Know whether I be dextrous to subdue Thy rebels, or be found the worst in heaven.'

"So spake the Son: but Satan, with his powers, Far was advanced on winged speed; a host Innumerable as the stars of night, Or stars of morning, dew-drops, which the sun Impearls on every leaf and every flower. Regions they pass'd, the mighty regencies Of seraphim, and potentates, and thrones, In their triple degrees; regions, to which All thy dominion, Adam, is no more Than what this garden is to all the earth, And all the sea, from one entire globose Stretch'd into longitude; which, having pass'd, At length into the limits of the north They came, and Satan to his royal seat, High on a hill, far blazing, as a mount Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers From diamond quarries hewn, and rocks of gold; The palace of great Lucifer (so call That structure in the dialect of men Interpreted), which, not long after, he, Affecting all equality with God, In imitation of that mount whereon Messiah was declared in sight of heaven, The Mountain of the Congregation call'd; For thither he assembled all his train, Pretending, so commanded, to consult About the great reception of their King, Thither to come; and with calumnious art Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears: "'Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers;

If these magnific titles yet remain Not merely titular, since by decree Another now hath to himself engross'd All power, and us eclipsed under the name Of King anointed, for whom all this haste Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here, This only to consult how we may best, With what may be devised of honours new, Receive him coming to receive from us Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile! Too much to one! but double how endured, To one and to his image now proclaim'd? But what if better counsels might erect Our minds, and teach us to cast off this yoke? Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend The supple knee? Ye will not, if I trust To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves Natives and sons of heaven, possess'd before By none: and if not equal all, yet free, Equally free; for orders and degrees Jar not with liberty, but well consist. Who can in reason, then, or right, assume Monarchy over such as live by right His equals, if in power and splendour less, In freedom equal? or can introduce Law and edict on us, who, without law, Err not? much less for this to be our Lord. And look for adoration, to the abuse Of those imperial titles, which assert Our being ordain'd to govern, not to serve.'

"Thus far his bold discourse, without control, Had audience: when, among the seraphim, Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal adored The Deity, and divine commands obey'd, Stood up, and, in a flame of zeal severe, The current of his fury thus opposed:

"'O argument blasphemous, false, and proud! Words which no ear ever to hear in heaven Expected, least of all from thee, ingrate, In place thyself so high above thy peers. Canst thou, with impious obloquy, condemn The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn, That to his only Son, by right endued With regal sceptre, every soul in heaven Shall bend the knee, and, in that honour due, Confess him rightful King? Unjust, thou say'st, Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free, And equal over equals to let reign, One over all, with unsucceeded power. Shalt thou give law to God? shalt thou dispute With him the points of liberty, who made Thee what thou art, and form'd the powers of heaven Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being? Yet, by experience taught, we know how good, And of our good, and of our dignity, How provident he is; how far from thought To make us less, bent rather to exalt Our happy state, under one head more near United. But to grant it thee unjust, That equal over equals monarch reign: Thyself, though great and glorious, dost thou count, Or all angelic nature join'd in one, Equal to him, begotten Son? by whom, As by his word, the Mighty Father made All things, even thee; and all the spirits of heaven By him created in their bright degrees; Crown'd them with glory, and to their glory named Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers,

Essential powers; nor by his reign obscured,
But more illustrious made; since he, the head,
One of our number thus reduced becomes;
His laws our laws; all honour to him done
Returns our own. Cease, then, this impious rage,
And tempt not these; but hasten to appease
The incensed Father and the incensed Son,
While pardon may be found, in time besought.'

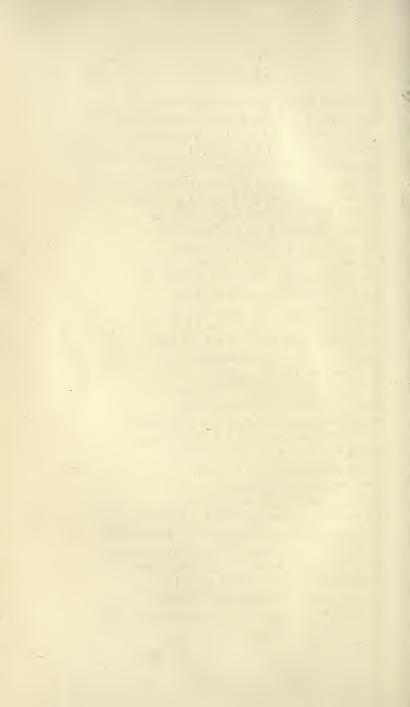
"So spake the fervent angel; but his zeal None seconded, as out of season judged, Or singular and rash: whereat rejoiced; The apostate, and, more haughty, thus replied:

"'That we were form'd, then, say'st thou? and the Of secondary hands, by task transferr'd From Father to his Son? Strange point, and new! Doctrine which we would know whence learn'd: who When this creation was? remember'st thou Saw Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being? We know no time when we were not as now; Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised By our own quickening power, when fatal course Had circled his full orb, the birth mature Of this our native heaven, ethereal sons. Our puissance is our own: our own right hand Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try Who is our equal: then thou shalt behold Whether by supplication we intend Address, and to begird the Almighty throne, Beseeching or besieging. This report, These tidings, carry to the anointed King; And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.'

"He said; and, as the sound of waters deep, Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applause Through the infinite host: nor less for that The flaming seraph, fearless, though alone, Encompass'd round with foes, thus answer'd bold:

"'O alienate from God, O spirit accursed, Forsaken of all good! I see thy fall Determined, and thy hapless crew involved In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread Both of thy crime and punishment: henceforth No more be troubled how to quit the yoke Of God's Messiah: those indulgent laws Will not be now youchsafed; other decrees Against thee are gone forth without recall; That golden sceptre, which thou didst reject, Is now an iron rod, to bruise and break Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise; Yet not for thy advice or threats I fly These wicked tents devoted; lest the wrath, Impendent, raging into sudden flame, Distinguish not: for soon expect to feel His thunder on thy head, devouring fire. Then who created thee lamenting learn. When who can uncreate thee thou shalt know.'

"So spake the seraph Abdiel, faithful found Among the faithless, faithful only he; Among innumerable false, unmoved, Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified, His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal; Nor number, nor example, with him wrought To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind, Though single. From amidst them forth he pass'd, Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustain'd Superior, nor of violence fear'd aught; And with retorted scorn, his back he turn'd On those proud towers, to swift destruction doom'd."



PARADISE LOST.

BOOK VI.

THE ARGUMENT.

Raphael continues to relate how Michael and Gabriel were sent forth to battle against Satan and his angels. The first fight described: Satan and his powers retire under night: he calls a council; invents devilish engines, which, in the second day's fight, put Michael and his angels to some disorder; but they at length pulling up mountains, overwhelm both the force and machines of Satan: yet, the tumult not so ending, God, on the third day, sends Messiah his Son, for whom he had reserved the glory of that victory; he, in the power of his Father, coming to the place, and causing all his legions to stand still on either side, with his chariot and thunder driving into the midst of his enemies, pursues them, unable to resist, towards the wall of heaven; which opening, they leap down with horror and confusion into the place of punishment prepared for them in the deep: Messiah returns with triumph to his Father.



LL night the dreadless angel, unpursued, [Morn, Through heaven's wide champaign held his way, till Waked by the circling hours, with rosy hand Unbarr'd the gates of light. There is a cave Within the mount of God, fast by his throne, Where light and darkness, in perpetual round

Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through Grateful vicissitude, like day and night; Theaven Light issues forth, and, at the other door, Obsequious darkness enters, till her hour To veil the heaven, though darkness there might well Seem twilight here: and now went forth the Morn, Such as in highest heaven, array'd in gold Empyreal; from before her vanish'd Night, Shot through with orient beams; when all the plain, Cover'd with thick embattled squadrons bright, Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds, Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his view: War he perceived, war in procinct; and found Already known what he for news had thought To have reported: gladly, then, he mix'd Among those friendly powers, who him received With joy and acclamations loud, that one, That of so many myriads fall'n, vet one Return'd not lost. On to the sacred hill They led him, high applauded, and present Before the seat supreme; from whence a voice, From midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard: "'Servant of God, well done; well hast thou fought

The better fight, who single hast maintain'd Against revolted multitudes the cause Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms; And for the testimony of truth hast borne Universal reproach, far worse to bear Than violence; for this was all thy care, To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds Judged thee perverse: the easier conquest now Remains thee: aided by this host of friends, Back on thy foes more glorious to return, Than scorn'd thou didst depart: and to subdue

By force, who reason for their law refuse;
Right reason for their law, and for their King
Messiah, who by right of merit reigns.
Go, Michael, of celestial armies prince;
And thou in military prowess next,
Gabriel, lead forth to battle these my sons
Invincible; lead forth my armed saints,
By thousands and by millions, ranged for fight,
Equal in number to that godless crew
Rebellious: them with fire and hostile arms
Fearless assault; and, to the brow of heaven
Pursuing, drive them out from God and bliss,
Into their place of punishment, the gulf
Of Tartarus, which ready opens wide
His fiery chaos to receive their fall.'

"So spake the Sovereign Voice, and clouds began To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll In dusky wreaths, reluctant flames, the sign Of wrath awaked; nor with less dread the loud Ethereal trumpet from on high 'gan blow: At which command the powers militant, That stood for heaven, in mighty quadrate join'd Of union irresistible, moved on, In silence, their bright legions to the sound Of instrumental harmony, that breathed Heroic ardour to adventurous deeds Under their godlike leaders, in the cause Of God and his Messiah. On they move, Indissolubly firm; nor obvious hill, Nor straitening vale, nor wood, nor stream, divides Their perfect ranks; for high above the ground Their march was, and the passive air upbore Their nimble tread. As when the total kind Of birds, in orderly array on wing,

Came summon'd over Eden to receive Their names of thee; so over many a tract Of heaven they march'd, and many a province wide, Tenfold the length of this terrene. At last, Far in the horizon, to the north, appear'd, From skirt to skirt, a fiery region, stretch'd In battailous aspect, and, nearer view, Bristled with upright beams innumerable Of rigid spears, and helmets throng'd, and shields Various, with boastful argument portray'd, The banded powers of Satan hasting on With furious expedition: for they ween'd That self-same day, by fight, or by surprise, To win the mount of God, and on his throne To set the envier of his state, the proud Aspirer; but their thoughts proved fond and vain In the mid-way; though strange to us it seem'd At first, that angel should with angel war, And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet So oft in festivals of joy and love Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire, Hymning the Eternal Father. But the shout Of battle now began, and rushing sound Of onset ended soon each milder thought. High in the midst, exalted as a god, The apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat, Idol of majesty divine, enclosed With flaming cherubim, and golden shields; Then lighted from his gorgeous throne, for now 'Twixt host and host but narrow space was left, A dreadful interval, and front to front Presented stood in terrible array Of hideous length: before the cloudy van, On the rough edge of battle ere it join'd,

Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced, Came towering, arm'd in adamant and gold: Abdiel that sight endured not, where he stood Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds, And thus his own undaunted heart explores:

"'O Heaven! that such resemblance of the Highest Should yet remain, where faith and realty Remain not: wherefore should not strength and might There fail where virtue fails? or weakest prove Where boldest, though to sight unconquerable? His puissance, trusting in the Almighty's aid, I mean to try, whose reason I have tried Unsound and false; nor is it aught but just That he who, in debate of truth, hath won, Should win in arms, in both disputes alike Victor; though brutish that contést and foul, When reason hath to deal with force; yet so Most reason is that reason overcome.'

"So pondering, and from his armed peers Forth stepping opposite, half-way he met His daring foe, at this prevention more Incensed, and thus securely him defied:

"'Proud, art thou met? thy hope was to have reach'd The height of thy aspiring unopposed;
The throne of God unguarded, and his side
Abandon'd, at the terror of thy power
Or potent tongue. Fool! not to think how vain
Against the Omnipotent to rise in arms;
Who, out of smallest things, could, without end,
Have raised incessant armies to defeat
Thy folly; or with solitary hand,
Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow,
Unaided, could have finish'd thee, and whelm'd
Thy legions under darkness! but thou seest

All are not of thy train; there be, who faith
Prefer, and piety to God, though then
To thee not visible, when I alone
Seem'd in thy world erroneous to dissent
From all; my sect thou seest; now learn too late
How few sometimes may know, when thousands err.'

"Whom the grand foe, with scornful eye askance, Thus answered: 'Ill for thee, but in wish'd hour Of my revenge, first sought for, thou return'st From flight, seditious angel, to receive Thy merited reward, the first assay Of this right hand provoked, since first that tongue, Inspired with contradiction, durst oppose A third part of the gods, in synod met Their deities to assert: who, while they feel Vigour divine within them, can allow Omnipotence to none. But well thou comest Before thy fellows, ambitious to win From me some plume, that thy success may show Destruction to the rest: this pause between (Unanswer'd lest thou boast), to let thee know, At first I thought that liberty and heaven, To heavenly souls, had been all one; but now I see that most through sloth had rather serve, Minist'ring spirits, train'd up in feast and song: Such hast thou arm'd, the minstrelsy of heaven, Servility with freedom to contend, As both their deeds compared this day shall prove.'

"To whom, in brief, thus Abdiel stern replied:
'Apostate! still thou err'st, nor end wilt find
Of erring, from the path of truth remote:
Unjustly thou deprayest it with the name
Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,
Or Nature: God and Nature bid the same,

When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
Them whom he governs. This is servitude,
To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebell'd
Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,
Thyself not free, but to thyself inthrall'd;
Yet lewdly darest our ministering upbraid.
Reign thou in hell, thy kingdom; let me serve,
In heaven, God ever blest, and his divine
Behests obey, worthiest to be obey'd;
Yet chains in hell, not realms, expect: meanwhile,
From me return'd, as erst thou saidst, from flight,
This greeting on thy impious crest receive.'

"So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high, Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight, Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield, Such ruin intercept: ten paces huge He back recoil'd: the tenth on bended knee His massy spear upstay'd; as if, on earth, Winds under ground, or waters forcing way, Sidelong, had push'd a mountain from his seat, Half sunk with all his pines. Amazement seized The rebel thrones, but greater rage, to see Thus foil'd their mightiest; ours joy fill'd, and shout, Presage of victory, and fierce desire Of battle: whereat Michael bid sound The archangel trumpet; through the vast of heaven It sounded, and the faithful armies rung Hosannah to the Highest: nor stood at gaze The adverse legions, nor less hideous join'd The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose, And clamour, such as heard in heaven till now Was never; arms on armour clashing bray'd Horrible discord, and the madding wheels

Of brazen chariots raged; dire was the noise Of conflict: over head the dismal hiss Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew, And, flying, vaulted either host with fire. So under fiery cope together rush'd Both battles main, with ruinous assault And inextinguishable rage. All heaven Resounded; and, had earth been then, all earth Had to her centre shook. What wonder? when Millions of fierce encountering angels fought On either side, the least of whom could wield These elements, and arm him with the force Of all their regions: how much more of power Army 'gainst army, numberless, to raise Dreadful combustion warring; and disturb, Though not destroy, their happy native seat; Had not the Eternal King Omnipotent, From his strong hold of heaven, high overruled And limited their might; though number'd such As each divided legion might have seem'd A numerous host; in strength each armed hand A legion; led in fight, yet leader seem'd Each warrior, single as in chief; expert When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway Of battle, open when, and when to close The ridges of grim war: no thought of flight, None of retreat, no unbecoming deed That argued fear; each on himself relied, As only in his arm the moment lay Of victory. Deeds of eternal fame Were done, but infinite; for wide was spread That war, and various: sometimes on firm ground A standing fight; then, soaring on main wing, Tormented all the air; all air seem'd then

Conflicting fire. Long time in even scale The battle hung; till Satan, who that day Prodigious power had shown, and met in arms No equal, ranging through the dire attack Of fighting seraphim confused, at length Saw where the sword of Michael smote, and fell'd Squadrons at once: with huge two-handed sway, Brandish'd aloft, the horrid edge came down Wide-wasting; such destruction to withstand He hasted, and opposed the rocky orb Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield, A vast circumference. At his approach The great archangel from his warlike toil Surceased, and glad, as hoping here to end Intestine war in heaven, the arch-foe subdued, Or captive dragg'd in chains, with hostile frown And visage all inflamed, first thus began:

"'Author of evil unknown till thy revolt, Unnamed in heaven, now plenteous, as thou seest These acts of hateful strife, hateful to all, Though heaviest, by just measure, on thyself And thy adherents: how hast thou disturb'd Heaven's blessed peace, and into nature brought Misery, uncreated till the crime Of thy rebellion? how hast thou instill'd Thy malice into thousands, once upright And faithful, now proved false? But think not here To trouble holy rest; heaven casts thee out From all her confines. Heaven, the seat of bliss, Brooks not the works of violence and war. Hence, then, and evil go with thee along, Thy offspring, to the place of evil, hell; Thou and thy wicked crew! there mingle broils, Ere this avenging sword begin thy doom,

Or some more sudden vengeance, wing'd from God, Precipitate thee with augmented pain.'

"So spake the prince of angels; to whom thus The adversary: 'Nor think thou with wind Of airy threats to awe whom yet with deeds Thou canst not. Hast thou turn'd the least of these To flight? or if to fall, but that they rise Unvanquish'd; easier to transact with me That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats To chase me hence? Err not that so shall end The strife which thou call'st evil, but we style The strife of glory; which we mean to win, Or turn this heaven itself into the hell Thou fablest; here, however, to dwell free, If not to reign: meanwhile, thy utmost force, And join him named Almighty to thy aid, I fly not, but have sought thee far and nigh.'

"They ended parle, and both address'd for fight Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue Of angels, can relate, or to what things Liken on earth conspicuous, that may lift Human imagination to such height Of godlike power? for likest gods they seem'd, Stood they or moved, in stature, motion, arms, Fit to decide the empire of great heaven. Now waved their fiery swords, and in the air Made horrid circles: two broad suns their shields Blazed opposite, while Expectation stood In horror: from each hand with speed retired, Where erst was thickest fight, the angelic throng, And left large field, unsafe within the wind Of such commotion; such as, to set forth Great things by small, if, Nature's concord broke, Among the constellations war were sprung,

Two planets, rushing from aspect malign Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound. Together both, with next to almighty arm Uplifted imminent, one stroke they aim'd That might determine, and not need repeat, As not of power at once; nor odds appear'd In might or swift prevention: but the sword Of Michael, from the armoury of God, Was given him temper'd so, that neither keen Nor solid might resist that edge: it met The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite Descending, and in half cut sheer; nor stay'd, But with swift wheel reverse, deep entering, shared All his right side: then Satan first knew pain, And writhed him to and fro convolved; so sore The grinding sword with discontinuous wound Pass'd through him: but the ethereal substance closed, Not long divisible; and from the gash A stream of nect'rous humour issuing flow'd, Sanguine, such as celestial spirits may bleed, And all his armour stain'd, erewhile so bright. Forthwith, on all sides, to his aid was run By angels many and strong, who interposed Defence, while others bore him on their shields Back to his chariot where it stood retired From off the files of war: there they him laid Gnashing for anguish, and despite, and shame, To find himself not matchless, and his pride Humbled by such rebuke, so far beneath His confidence to equal God in power. Yet soon he heal'd; for spirits that live throughout Vital in every part, not as frail man In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins,

Cannot but by annihilating die;
Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
Receive, no more than can the fluid air:
All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear,
All intellect, all sense; and, as they please,
They limb themselves, and colour, shape, or size
Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.

"Meanwhile, in other parts, like deeds deserved Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought,



And with fierce ensigns pierced the deep array Of Moloch, furious king, who him defied, And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound Threaten'd, nor from the Holy One of heaven Refrain'd his tongue blasphémous; but anon, Down cloven to the waist, with shatter'd arms, And uncouth pain, fled bellowing. On each wing, Uriel and Raphaël, his vaunting foe, Though huge, and in a rock of diamond arm'd, Vanquish'd Adramelech and Asmadai, Two potent thrones, that to be less than gods Disdain'd, but meaner thoughts learn'd in their flight, Mangled with ghastly wounds through plate and mail. Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annov The atheist crew, but with redoubled blow, Ariel, and Arioch, and the violence Of Ramiel, scorch'd and blasted, overthrew. I might relate of thousands, and their names Eternize here on earth; but those elect Angels, contented with their fame in heaven, Seek not the praise of men; the other sort, In might though wondrous, and in acts of war, Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom Cancell'd from heaven and sacred memory, Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell. For strength from truth divided, and from just, Illaudable, nought merits but dispraise And ignominy; yet to glory aspires, Vain-glorious, and through infamy seeks fame; Therefore eternal silence be their doom.

"And now, their mightiest quell'd, the battle swerved, With many an inroad gored; deformed rout Enter'd, and foul disorder; all the ground With shiver'd armour strown, and on a heap Chariot and charioteer lay overturn'd And fiery-foaming steeds; what stood, recoil'd, O'er-wearied, through the faint Satanic host, Defensive scarce; or with pale fear surprised, Then first with fear surprised, and sense of pain, Fled ignominious, to such evil brought By sin of disobedience; till that hour Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain. Far otherwise the inviolable saints, In cubic phalanx firm, advanced entire, Invulnerable, impenetrably arm'd; Such high advantages their innocence Gave them above their foes; not to have sinn'd, Not to have disobey'd; in fight they stood Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pain'd By wound, though from their place by violence moved

"Now Night her course began, and, over heaven Inducing darkness, grateful truce imposed, And silence on the odious din of war: Under her cloudy covert both retired, Victor and vanquish'd: on the foughten field Michaël and his angels, prevalent Encamping, placed in guard their watches round Cherubic waving fires: on the other part, Satan with his rebellious disappear'd, Far in the dark dislodged; and, void of rest, His potentates to council call'd by night; And in the midst thus undismay'd began:

"' O now in danger tried, now known in arms Not to be overpower'd, companions dear, Found worthy not of liberty alone, Too mean pretence! but, what we more affect, Honour, dominion, glory, and renown:

Who have sustain'd one day, in doubtful fight,

(And if one day, why not eternal days?) What heaven's Lord had powerfulest to send Against us from about his throne, and judged Sufficient to subdue us to his will, But proves not so: then fallible, it seems, Of future, we may deem him, though, till now, Omniscient thought. True is, less firmly arm'd, Some disadvantage we endured, and pain, Till now not known, but, known, as soon contemn'd; Since now we find this our empyreal form Incapable of mortal injury, Imperishable; and, though pierced with wound, Soon closing, and by native vigour heal'd. Of evil, then, so small, as easy think The remedy; perhaps more valid arms, Weapons more violent, when next we meet, May serve to better us, and worse our foes, Or equal what between us made the odds, In nature none: if other hidden cause Left them superior, while we can preserve Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound, Due search and consultation will disclose.'

"He sat; and in the assembly next upstood Nisroch, of principalities the prime; As one he stood escaped from cruel fight, Sore toil'd, his riven arms to havock hewn; And, cloudy in aspect, thus answering spake:

"'Deliverer from new lords, leader to free Enjoyment of our rights as gods; yet hard For gods, and too unequal work we find, Against unequal arms, to fight in pain, Against unpain'd, impassive; from which evil Ruin must needs ensue; for what avails Valour or strength, though matchless, quell'd with pain

Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands Of mightiest? Sense of pleasure we may well Spare out of life, perhaps, and not repine, But live content, which is the calmest life: But pain is perfect misery, the worst Of evils, and, excessive, overturns All patience. He who, therefore, can invent With what more forcible we may offend Our yet unwounded enemies, or arm Ourselves with like defence, to me deserves No less than for deliverance what we owe.

"Whereto, with look composed, Satan replied: 'Not uninvented that, which thou aright Believest so main to our success, I bring. Which of us, who beholds the bright surfáce Of this ethereous mould whereon we stand, This continent of spacious heaven, adorn'd With plant, fruit, flower ambrosial, gems, and gold; Whose eye so superficially surveys These things, as not to mind from whence they grow, Deep under ground, materials dark and crude, Of spirituous and fiery spume; till touch'd With heaven's ray, and temper'd, they shoot forth So beauteous, opening to the ambient light? These, in their dark nativity, the deep Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame; Which, into hollow engines, long and round, Thick ramm'd, at the other bore with touch of fire Dilated and infuriate, shall send forth From far, with thundering noise, among our foes, Such implements of mischief, as shall dash To pieces, and o'erwhelm, whatever stands Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarm'd The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt.

Nor long shall be our labour: yet, ere dawn, Effect shall end our wish. Meanwhile revive; Abandon fear; to strength and counsel join'd Think nothing hard, much less to be despair'd,'

"He ended; and his words their drooping cheer Enlighten'd, and their languish'd hope revived: The invention all admired, and each how he To be the inventor miss'd; so easy it seem'd Once found, which yet unfound most would have Impossible: yet, haply, of thy race, [thought In future days, if malice should abound, Some one, intent on mischief, or inspired With devilish machination, might devise Like instrument to plague the sons of men For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent. Forthwith from council to the work they flew; None arguing stood: innumerable hands Were ready; in a moment up they turn'd Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath The originals of nature in their crude Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam They found; they mingled, and, with subtle art, Concocted and adjusted; they reduced To blackest grain, and into store convey'd. Part hidden veins digg'd up (nor hath this earth Entrails unlike) of mineral and stone, Whereof to found their engines and their balls Of missive ruin; part incentive reed Provide, pernicious with one touch to fire. So all, ere day-spring, under conscious night, Secret they finish'd, and in order set, With silent circumspection, unespied.

"Now when fair morn orient in heaven appear'd, Up rose the victor-angels, and to arms The matin trumpet sung: in arms they stood
Of golden panoply, refulgent host,
Soon banded; others from the dawning hills
Look'd round, and scouts each coast, light-armed, scour
Each quarter, to descry the distant foe,
Where lodged, or whither fled; or if for fight,
In motion or in halt; him soon they met,
Under spread ensigns, moving nigh, in slow
But firm battalion: back, with speediest sail,
Zophiel, of cherubim the swiftest wing,
Came flying, and, in mid air, aloud thus cried:

"'Arm, warriors, arm for fight; the foe at hand, Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit. This day, fear not his flight; so thick a cloud He comes, and settled in his face I see Sad resolution, and secure: let each His adamantine coat gird well, and each Fit well his helm, gripe fast his orbed shield, Borne even or high; for this day will pour down, If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower, But rattling storm of arrows barb'd with fire.'

"So warn'd he them; aware themselves, and soon In order, quit of all impediment,
Instant, without disturb, they took alarm,
And onward moved embattled: when, behold!
Not distant far, with heavy pace, the foe
Approaching gross and huge, in hollow cube,
Training his devilish enginery, impaled
On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,
To hide the fraud. At interview both stood
Awhile; but suddenly at head appear'd
Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud:

"'Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold, That all may see, who hate us, how we seek Peace and composure, and with open breast Stand ready to receive them, if they like Our overture, and turn not back perverse: But that I doubt; however, witness heaven! Heaven! witness thou anon, while we discharge Freely our part: ye, who appointed stand, Do as you have in charge, and briefly touch What we propound, and loud, that all may hear.'

"So scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce Had ended, when to right and left the front Divided, and to either flank retired: Which to our eyes discover'd, new and strange, A triple mounted row of pillars, laid On wheels (for like to pillars most they seem'd, Or hollow'd bodies made of oak or fir, With branches lopt, in wood or mountain fell'd); Brass, iron, stony mould, had not their mouths With hideous orifice gaped on us wide, Portending hollow truce: at each, behind, A seraph stood, and in his hand a reed Stood waving, tipt with fire; while we, suspense, Collected stood, within our thoughts amused, Not long; for sudden, all at once, their reeds Put forth, and to a narrow vent applied With nicest touch. Immediate, in a flame, But soon obscured with smoke, all heaven appear'd, From those deep-throated engines belch'd, whose roar Embowell'd with outrageous noise the air, And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul Their devilish glut, chain'd thunderbolts and hail Of iron globes; which, on the victor host Levell'd, with such impetuous fury smote, That whom they hit, none on their feet might stand, Though standing else as rocks; but down they fell

By thousands, angel on archangel roll'd,
The sooner for their arms; unarm'd, they might
Have easily, as spirits, evaded swift
By quick contraction or remove; but now
Foul dissipation follow'd, and forced rout;
Nor served it to relax their serried files.
What should they do? if on they rush'd, repulse
Repeated, and indecent overthrow
Doubled, would render them yet more despised,
And to their foes a laughter; for in view
Stood rank'd of seraphim another row,
In posture to displode their second tire
Of thunder: back defeated to return
They worse abhorr'd. Satan beheld their plight,
And to his mates thus in derision call'd:

""O friends! why come not on these victors proud? Erewhile they fierce were coming; and when we, To entertain them fair with open front And breast (what could we more?) propounded terms Of composition, straight they changed their minds, Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell, As they would dance; yet for a dance they seem'd Somewhat extravagant and wild; perhaps, For joy of offer'd peace: but I suppose, If our proposals once again were heard, We should compel them to a quick result.'

"To whom thus Belial, in like gamesome mood:
'Leader, the terms we sent were terms of weight,
Of hard contents, and full of force urged home;
Such as we might perceive amused them all,
And stumbled many: who receives them right,
Had need from head to foot well understand;
Not understood, this gift they have besides,
They show us when our foes walk not upright.'

"So they among themselves in pleasant vein Stood scoffing, heighten'd in their thoughts beyond All doubt of victory; Eternal Might To match with their inventions they presumed So easy, and of his thunder made a scorn, And all his host derided, while they stood Awhile in trouble: but they stood not long; Rage prompted them at length, and found them arms Against such hellish mischief fit to oppose. Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power, Which God hath in his mighty angels placed!) Their arms away they threw, and to the hills (For earth hath this variety from heaven Of pleasure situate in hill and dale), Light as the lightning glimpse, they ran, they flew; From their foundations loosening to and fro, They pluck'd the seated hills, with all their load, Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops Uplifting, bore them in their hands: amaze, Be sure, and terror, seized the rebel host, When coming towards them so dread they saw The bottom of the mountains upward turn'd; Till on those cursed engines' triple row They saw them whelm'd, and all their confidence Under the weight of mountains buried deep; Themselves invaded next, and on their heads Main promontories flung, which in the air Came shadowing, and oppress'd whole legions arm'd; Their armour help'd their harm, crush'd in and bruised, Into their substance pent, which wrought them pain Implacable, and many a dolorous groan, Long struggling underneath, ere they could wind Out of such prison, though spirits of purest light, Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown.

The rest, in imitation, to like arms Betook them, and the neighbouring hills uptore: So hills amid the air encounter'd hills, Hurl'd to and fro with jaculation dire, That under ground they fought in dismal shade; Infernal noise! War seem'd a civil game To this uproar: horrid confusion heap'd Upon confusion rose. And now all heaven Had gone to wrack, with ruin overspread, Had not the Almighty Father, where he sits Shrined in his sanctuary of heaven secure, Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen This tumult, and permitted all, advised; That his great purpose he might so fulfil, To honour his anointed Son avenged Upon his enemies; and to declare All power on him transferr'd: whence to his Son, The assessor of his throne, he thus began:

"' Effulgence of my glory, Son beloved, Son, in whose face invisible is beheld Visibly what by Deity I am, And in whose hand what by decree I do, Second Omnipotence! two days are past, Two days, as we compute the days of heaven, Since Michael and his powers went forth to tame These disobedient: sore hath been their fight, As likeliest was, when two such foes met arm'd: For to themselves I left them; and thou know'st, Equal in their creation they were form'd, Save what sin hath impair'd, which yet hath wrought Insensibly, for I suspend their doom; Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last Endless, and no solution will be found: War wearied hath perform'd what war can do,

And to disorder'd rage let loose the reins, With mountains, as with weapons, arm'd; which makes Wild work in heaven, and dangerous to the main. Two days are, therefore, past, the third is thine; For thee I have ordain'd it; and thus far Have suffer'd, that the glory may be thine Of ending this great war, since none but thou Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace Immense I have transfused, that all may know In heaven and hell thy power above compare: And this perverse commotion govern'd thus, To manifest thee worthiest to be Heir Of all things; to be Heir and to be King By sacred unction, thy deserved right. Go, then, thou Mightiest, in thy Father's might; Ascend my chariot, guide the rapid wheels That shake heaven's basis, bring forth all my war, My bow and thunder; my almighty arms Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh; Pursue these sons of darkness, drive them out From all heaven's bounds into the utter deep; There let them learn, as likes them, to despise God, and Messiah his anointed King.'

"He said, and on his Son with rays direct Shone full; he all his Father full express'd, Ineffably into his face received; And thus the filial Godhead answering spake:

"'O Father, O supreme of heavenly thrones, First, Highest, Holiest, Best, thou always seek'st To glorify thy Son; I always thee, As is most just: this I my glory account, My exaltation, and my whole delight, That thou, in me well pleased, declarest thy will Fulfill'd, which to fulfil is all my bliss.

Sceptre and power, thy giving, I assume, And gladlier shall resign, when in the end Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee For ever, and in me all whom thou lovest: But whom thou hatest, I hate, and can put on Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on, Image of thee in all things; and shall soon, Arm'd with thy might, rid heaven of these rebell'd; To their prepared ill mansion driven down, To chains of darkness, and the undying worm; That from thy just obedience could revolt, Whom to obey is happiness entire. Then shall thy saints, unmix'd, and from the impure Far separate, circling thy holy mount, Unfeigned hallelujahs to thee sing, Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief.' "So said, he, o'er his sceptre bowing, rose

From the right hand of glory where he sat; And the third sacred morn began to shine, Dawning through heaven. Forth rush'd with whirlwind The chariot of Paternal Deity, Sound Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn, Itself instinct with spirit, but convoy'd By four cherubic shapes; four faces each Had wondrous; as with stars, their bodies all, And wings, were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels Of beryl, and careering fires between; Over their heads a crystal firmament, Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure Amber, and colours of the showery arch. He, in celestial panoply all arm'd Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought, Ascended; at his right hand Victory Sat, eagle-wing'd; beside him hung his bow

And quiver with three-bolted thunder stored; And from about him fierce effusion roll'd Of smoke, and bickering flame, and sparkles dire: Attended with ten thousand thousand saints, He onward came; far off his coming shone; And twenty thousand (I their number heard) Chariots of God, half on each hand, were seen: He on the wings of cherub rode sublime On the crystálline sky, in sapphire throned, Illustrious far and wide; but by his own First seen: them unexpected joy surprised, When the great ensign of Messiah blazed Aloft, by angels borne, his sign in heaven; Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced His army, circumfused on either wing, Under their Head embodied all in one. Before him Power Divine his way prepared; At his command the uprooted hills retired Each to his place; they heard his voice, and went Obsequious: heaven his wonted face renew'd, And with fresh flow'rets hill and valley smiled.

"This saw his hapless foes, but stood obdured, And to rebellious fight rallied their powers, Insensate, hope conceiving from despair. In heavenly spirits could such perverseness dwell, But to convince the proud what signs avail, Or wonders move, the obdurate to relent? They, harden'd more by what might most reclaim, Grieving to see his glory, at the sight Took envy; and, aspiring to his height, Stood re-embattled fierce, by force or fraud Weening to prosper, and at length prevail Against God and Messiah, or to fall In universal ruin last: and now

To final battle drew, disdaining flight, Or faint retreat; when the great Son of God To all his host on either hand thus spake:

"'Stand still in bright array, ye saints; here stand, Ye angels arm'd; this day from battle rest: Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God Accepted, fearless in his righteous cause: And as ye have received, so have ye done, Invincibly; but of this cursed crew The punishment to other hand belongs; Vengeance is his, or whose he sole appoints; Number to this day's work is not ordain'd, Nor multitude; stand only and behold God's indignation on these godless pour'd By me; not you, but me, they have despised, Yet envied; against me is all their rage, Because the Father, to whom, in heaven supreme, Kingdom, and power, and glory, appertain, Hath honour'd me, according to his will. Therefore to me their doom he hath assign'd: That they may have their wish, to try with me In battle which the stronger proves; they all, Or I alone against them; since by strength They measure all, of other excellence Not emulous, nor care who them excels; Nor other strife with them do I vouchsafe.'

"So spake the Son, and into terror changed His count'nance, too severe to be beheld, And full of wrath bent on his enemies. At once the four spread out their starry wings With dreadful shade contiguous, and the orbs Of his fierce chariot roll'd, as with the sound Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host. He on his impious foes right onward drove,

Gloomy as night: under his burning wheels
The steadfast empyréan shook throughout,
All but the throne itself of God. Full soon
Among them he arrived; in his right hand
Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent
Before him, such as in their souls infix'd
Plagues: they, astonish'd, all resistance lost,
All courage; down their idle weapons dropt;



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O'er shields, and helms, and helmed heads he rode Of thrones and mighty seraphim prostráte; That wish'd the mountains now might be again Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire. Nor less on either side tempestuous fell His arrows, from the fourfold-visaged four Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels Distinct alike with multitude of eyes; One spirit in them ruled, and every eye Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire Among the accursed, that wither'd all their strength, And of their wonted vigour left them drain'd, Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fall'n. Yet half his strength he put not forth, but check'd His thunder in mid-volley; for he meant Not to destroy, but root them out of heaven: The overthrown he raised, and as a herd Of goats or timorous flock together throng'd, Drove them before him, thunderstruck, pursued With terrors, and with furies, to the bounds And crystal wall of heaven; which, opening wide, Roll'd inward, and a spacious gap disclosed Into the wasteful deep: the monstrous sight Struck them with horror backward, but far worse Urged them behind: headlong themselves they threw Down from the verge of heaven; eternal wrath Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.

"Hell heard the unsufferable noise; hell saw
Heaven ruining from heaven, and would have fled
Affrighted: but strict Fate had cast too deep
Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.
Nine days they fell: confounded Chaos roar'd,
And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
Through his wild anarchy; so huge a rout

Encumber'd him with ruin. Hell at last, Yawning, received them whole, and on them closed; Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain. Disburden'd heaven rejoiced, and soon repair'd Her mural breach, returning whence it roll'd.

"Sole Victor, from the expulsion of his foes,
Messiah his triumphal chariot turn'd:
To meet him, all his saints, who silent stood
Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,
With jubilee advanced; and, as they went,
Shaded with branching palm, each order bright
Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,
Son, Heir, and Lord, to him dominion given,
Worthiest to reign. He, celebrated, rode
Triumphant through mid heaven, into the courts
And temple of his mighty Father throned
On high; who into glory him received,
Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.

"Thus measuring things in heaven by things on earth,
At thy request, and that thou may'st beware
By what is past, to thee I have reveal'd
What might have else to human race been hid:
The discord which befell, and war in heaven
Among the angelic powers, and the deep fall
Of those, too high aspiring, who rebell'd
With Satan; he who envies now thy state,
Who now is plotting how he may seduce
Thee also from obedience, that with him,
Bereaved of happiness, thou may'st partake
His punishment, eternal misery;
Which would be all his solace and revenge,
As a despite done against the Most High,
Thee once to gain companion of his woe.

But listen not to his temptations, warn Thy weaker; let it profit thee to have heard, By terrible example, the reward Of disobedience; firm they might have stood, Yet fell; remember, and fear to transgress."



PARADISE LOST.

BOOK VII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Raphael, at the request of Adam, relates how and wherefore this world was first created; that God, after the expelling of Satan and his angels out of heaven, declared his pleasure to create another world, and other creatures to dwell therein; sends his Son with glory, and attendance of angels, to perform the work of creation in six days: the angels celebrate with hymns the performance thereof, and his reascension into heaven.



ESCEND from heaven, Urania, by that name If rightly thou art call'd, whose voice divine Following, above the Olympian hill I soar, Above the flight of Pegaséan wing.

The meaning, not the name, I call: for thou Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top

Of old Olympus dwell'st; but, heavenly-born, Before the hills appear'd, or fountain flow'd, Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse. Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased With thy celestial song. Up led by thee, Into the heaven of heavens I have presumed, An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air, Thy tempering. With like safety guided down, Return me to my native element; Lest, from this flying steed unrein'd (as once Bellerophon, though from a lower clime), Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall, Erroneous there to wander, and forlorn. Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound Within the visible diurnal sphere; Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole, More safe I sing with mortal voice unchanged To hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil days, On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues; In darkness, and with dangers compass'd round, And solitude; yet not alone, while thou Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn Purples the east: still govern thou my song, Urania, and fit audience find, though few. But drive far off the barbarous dissonance Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard In Rhodopé, where woods and rocks had ears To rapture, till the savage clamour drown'd Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend Her son. So fail not thou, who thee implores; For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream. Say, goddess, what ensued when Raphael,

The affable archangel, had forewarn'd Adam, by dire example, to beware Apostasy, by what befell in heaven To those apostates; lest the like befall In Paradise to Adam or his race. Charged not to touch the interdicted tree, If they transgress, and slight that sole command, So easily obey'd amid the choice Of all tastes else to please their appetite, Though wandering. He, with his consorted Eve, The story heard attentive, and was fill'd With admiration and deep muse, to hear Of things so high and strange; things to their thought So unimaginable as hate in heaven, And war so near the peace of God in bliss, With such confusion: but the evil, soon Driven back, redounded as a flood on those From whom it sprung, impossible to mix With blessedness. Whence Adam soon repeal'd The doubts that in his heart arose; and now Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know What nearer might concern him; how this world Of heaven and earth conspicuous first began; When, and whereof created; for what cause; What within Eden, or without, was done Before his memory: as one, whose drought Yet scarce allay'd, still eyes the current stream, Whose liquid murmur heard, new thirst excites, Proceeded thus to ask his heavenly guest:

"Great things, and full of wonder in our ears, Far differing from this world, thou hast reveal'd, Divine Interpreter! by favour sent Down from the empyréan, to forewarn Us timely of what might else have been our loss,

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Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach; For which, to the infinitely Good we owe Immortal thanks, and his admonishment Receive, with solemn purpose to observe Immutably his sovereign will, the end Of what we are. But since thou hast vouchsafed Gently, for our instruction, to impart Things above earthly thought, which yet concern'd Our knowing, as to highest Wisdom seem'd, Deign to descend now lower, and relate What may no less, perhaps, avail us known: How first began this heaven which we behold Distant so high, with moving fires adorn'd Innumerable; and this which yields or fills All space, the ambient air wide interfused, Embracing round this florid earth: what cause Moved the Creator, in his holy rest Through all eternity, so late to build In Chaos; and the work begun, how soon Absolved; if unforbid thou may'st unfold What we, not to explore the secrets, ask Of his eternal empire, but the more To magnify his works, the more we know. And the great light of day yet wants to run Much of his race, though steep; suspense in heaven, Held by thy voice, thy potent voice, he hears, And longer will delay, to hear thee tell His generation, and the rising birth Of nature from the unapparent deep: Or if the star of evening and the moon Haste to thy audience, night with her will bring Silence; and sleep, list'ning to thee, will watch; Or we can bid his absence, till thy song End, and dismiss thee ere the morning shine."

Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought; And thus the godlike angel answer'd mild:

"This also thy request, with caution ask'd, Obtain; though, to recount almighty works, What words or tongue of seraph can suffice, Or heart of man suffice to comprehend? Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve To glorify the Maker, and infer Thee also happier, shall not be withheld Thy hearing; such commission from above I have received, to answer thy desire Of knowledge within bounds; beyond, abstain To ask; nor let thine own inventions hope Things not reveal'd, which the invisible King, Only omniscient, hath suppress'd in night, To none communicable in earth or heaven: Enough is left besides to search and know; But knowledge is as food, and needs no less Her temperance over appetite, to know In measure what the mind may well contain; Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.

"Know then, that, after Lucifer from heaven (So call him, brighter once amidst the host Of angels, than that star the stars among)
Fell with his flaming legions through the deep Into his place, and the great Son return'd Victorious with his saints, the Omnipotent Eternal Father from his throne beheld Their multitude, and to his Son thus spake:

"'At least our envious foe hath fail'd, who thought All like himself rebellious; by whose aid This inaccessible high strength, the seat Of Deity supreme, us dispossess'd,

He trusted to have seized, and into fraud Drew many, whom their place knows here no more; Yet far the greater part have kept, I see, Their station; heaven, yet populous, retains Number sufficient to possess her realms Though wide, and this high temple to frequent With ministeries due, and solemn rites: But, lest his heart exalt him in the harm Already done, to have dispeopled heaven, My damage fondly deem'd, I can repair That detriment, if such it be, to lose Self-lost: and in a moment will create Another world, out of one man a race Of men innumerable, there to dwell, Not here; till by degrees of merit raised, They open to themselves at length the way Up hither, under long obedience tried; And earth be changed to heaven, and heaven to earth, One kingdom, joy and union without end. Meanwhile, inhabit lax, ye powers of heaven; And thou, my Word, begotten Son, by thee This I perform; speak thou, and be it done! My overshadowing Spirit and might with thee I send along; ride forth, and bid the deep Within appointed bounds be heaven and earth; Boundless the deep, because I Am, who fill Infinitude: nor vacuous the space, Though I, uncircumscribed myself, retire, And put not forth my goodness, which is free To act or not; necessity and chance Approach not me, and what I will is fate.' "So spake the Almighty, and to what he spake, His Word, the filial Godhead, gave effect.

Immediate are the acts of God, more swift

Than time or motion; but to human ears
Cannot without process of speech be told,
So told as earthly notion can receive.
Great triumph and rejoicing were in heaven,
When such was heard declared the Almighty's will;
Glory they sung to the Most High, good-will
To future men, and in their dwellings peace:
Glory to him, whose just avenging ire
Had driven out the ungodly from his sight
And the habitations of the just; to him
Glory and praise, whose wisdom had ordain'd
Good out of evil to create; instead
Of spirits malign, a better race to bring
Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse
His good to worlds and ages infinite.

"So sang the hierarchies: meanwhile the Son On his great expedition now appear'd, Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crown'd Of majesty divine: sapience and love Immense, and all his Father in him shone. About his chariot numberless were pour'd Cherub and seraph, potentates and thrones, And virtues, winged spirits, and chariots wing'd From the armoury of God; where stand of old Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged Against a solemn day, harness'd at hand, Celestial equipage; and now came forth, Spontaneous, for within them spirit lived, Attendant on their Lord: heaven open'd wide Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound! On golden hinges moving, to let forth The King of Glory, in his powerful Word And Spirit, coming to create new worlds. On heavenly ground they stood; and from the shore They view'd the vast immeasurable abyss,
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds
And surging waves, as mountains, to assault
Heaven's height, and with the centre mix the pole.

"'Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou deep, peace,' Said then the omnific Word: 'your discord end!' Nor stay'd; but on the wings of cherubim Uplifted, in paternal glory rode Far into Chaos, and the world unborn; For Chaos heard his voice: him all his train Follow'd in bright procession, to behold Creation, and the wonders of his might. Then stay'd the fervid wheels, and in his hand He took the golden compasses, prepared In God's eternal store, to circumscribe This universe, and all created things: One foot he centred, and the other turn'd Round through the vast profundity obscure; And said, 'Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds, This be thy just circumference, O world!' Thus God the heaven created, thus the earth, Matter unform'd and void: darkness profound Cover'd the abyss; but on the watery calm His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread, And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth, Throughout the fluid mass; but downward purged The black; tartareous, cold, infernal dregs, Adverse to life: then founded, then conglobed Like things to like; the rest to several place Disparted, and between spun out the air; And earth, self-balanced, on her centre hung. "'Let there be light,' said God; and forthwith light

Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,

Sprung from the deep; and from her native east To journey through the aëry gloom began, Sphered in a radiant cloud; for yet the sun Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle Sojourn'd the while. God saw the light was good; And light from darkness by the hemisphere Divided: light, the day, and darkness, night, He named. Thus was the first day even and morn:



Nor pass'd uncelebrated, nor unsung
By the celestial quires, when orient light
Exhaling first from darkness they beheld;
Birth-day of heaven and earth: with joy and shout
The hollow universal orb they fill'd,
And touch'd their golden harps, and hymning praised
God and his works: Creator him they sung,
Both when first evening was, and when first morn.

"Again, God said, 'Let there be firmament Amid the waters, and let it divide The waters from the waters;' and God made The firmament, expanse of liquid pure, Transparent, elemental air, diffused In circuit to the uttermost convex Of this great round; partition firm and sure, The waters underneath from those above Dividing: for as earth, so he the world Built on circumfluous waters, calm, in wide Crystalline ocean, and the loud misrule Of Chaos far removed; lest fierce extremes Contiguous might distemper the whole frame: And heaven he named the firmament. So even And morning chorus sung the second day.

"The earth was form'd, but in the womb as yet Of waters, embryon immature involved, Appear'd not; over all the face of earth Main ocean flow'd, not idle; but, with warm Prolific humour softening all her globe, Fermented the great mother to conceive, Satiate with genial moisture; when God said, 'Be gather'd now, ye waters under heaven, Into one place, and let dry land appear.' Immediately the mountains huge appear Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave

Into the clouds; their tops ascend the sky: So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep, Capacious bed of waters: thither they Hasted with glad precipitance, uproll'd, As drops on dust conglobing from the dry; Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct, For haste; such flight the great command impress'd On the swift floods; as armies at the call Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard) Troop to their standard; so the watery throng, Wave rolling after wave, where way they found; If steep, with torrent rapture; if through plain, Soft ebbing: nor withstood them rock or hill; But they, or under ground, or circuit wide With serpent error wandering, found their way, And on the washy ooze deep channels wore; Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry, All but within those banks, where rivers now Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train. The dry land, earth; and the great receptacle Of congregated waters, he call'd seas: And saw that it was good; and said, 'Let the earth Put forth the verdant grass, herb yielding seed, And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind, Whose seed is in herself upon the earth.' He scarce had said, when the bare earth, till then Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorn'd, Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad Her universal face with pleasant green; Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flower'd, Opening their various colours, and made gay Her bosom, smelling sweet; and, these scarce blown, Forth flourish'd thick the clustering vine, forth crept 2 E VOL. I.

The swelling gourd, up stood the corny reed Embattled in her field, and the humble shrub, And bush with frizzled hair implicit: last Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread Their branches, hung with copious fruit, or gemm'd Their blossoms: with high woods the hills were crown'd, With tufts the valleys, and each fountain side; With borders long the rivers: that earth now Seem'd like to heaven, a seat where gods might dwell, Or wander with delight, and love to haunt Her sacred shades; though God had yet not rain'd Upon the earth, and man to till the ground None was; but from the earth a dewy mist Went up, and water'd all the ground, and each Plant of the field; which, ere it was in the earth, God made, and every herb, before it grew On the green stem. God saw that it was good: So even and morn recorded the third day.

"Again the Almighty spake, 'Let there be lights High in the expanse of heaven, to divide The day from night; and let them be for signs, For seasons, and for days, and circling years; And let them be for lights, as I ordain Their office in the firmament of heaven, To give light on the earth;' and it was so. And God made two great lights, great for their use To man, the greater to have rule by day, The less by night, altern; and made the stars, And set them in the firmament of heaven To illuminate the earth, and rule the day In their vicissitude, and rule the night, And light from darkness to divide. God saw, Surveying his great work, that it was good: For, of celestial bodies, first the sun,

A mighty sphere, he framed, unlightsome first, Though of ethereal mould; then form'd the moon Globose, and every magnitude of stars, And sow'd with stars the heaven, thick as a field: Of light by far the greater part he took, Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and placed In the sun's orb, made porous to receive And drink the liquid light: firm to retain Her gather'd beams, great palace now of light. Hither, as to their fountain, other stars Repairing, in their golden urns draw light, And hence the morning planet gilds her horns; By tincture or reflection they augment Their small peculiar, though from human sight So far remote, with diminution seen. First in his east the glorious lamp was seen, Regent of day, and all the horizon round Invested with bright rays, jocund to run His longitude through heaven's high road; the grey Dawn, and the Pleiades, before him danced, Shedding sweet influence: less bright the moon, But opposite in levell'd west was set, His mirror, with full face borrowing her light From him; for other light she needed none In that aspect, and still that distance keeps Till night; then in the east her turn she shines, Revolved on heaven's great axle, and her reign With thousand lesser lights dividual holds, With thousand thousand stars, that then appear'd Spangling the hemisphere: then first adorn'd With her bright luminaries, that set and rose, Glad evening and glad morn crown'd the fourth day.

"And God said, 'Let the waters generate Reptile with spawn abundant, living soul:

And let fowl fly above the earth, with wings Displayed on the open firmament of heaven.' And God created the great whales, and each Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously The waters generated by their kinds; And every bird of wing after his kind; And saw that it was good, and bless'd them, saying, 'Be fruitful, multiply, and in the seas, And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill: And let the fowl be multiplied on the earth.' Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay, With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals Of fish that, with their fins, and shining scales, Glide under the green wave, in sculls that oft Bank the mid-sea: part single, or with mate, Graze the sea-weed, their pasture, and through groves Of coral stray; or, sporting with quick glance, Show to the sun their waved coats, dropt with gold; Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend Moist nutriment; or under rocks their food, In jointed armour, watch: on smooth, the seal And bended dolphins play; part, huge of bulk, Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait, Tempest the ocean: there leviathan, Hugest of living creatures, on the deep Stretch'd like a promontory, sleeps or swims, And seems a moving land; and at his gills Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea. Meanwhile the tepid caves, and fens, and shores, Their brood as numerous hatch from the egg that soon, Bursting with kindly rupture, forth disclosed Their callow young; but feather'd soon and fledge They summ'd their pens; and, soaring the air sublime, With clang despised the ground, under a cloud

In prospect: there the eagle and the stork On cliffs and cedar-tops their eyries build: Part loosely wing the region; part, more wise, In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way, Intelligent of seasons, and set forth Their aëry caravan, high over seas Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing Easing their flight; so steers the prudent crane Her annual voyage, borne on winds; the air Floats as they pass, fann'd with unnumber'd plumes: From branch to branch the smaller birds with song Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings Till even; nor then the solemn nightingale Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft lays: Others, on silver lakes and rivers, bathed Their downy breast; the swan with arched neck Between her white wings, mantling proudly, rows Her state with oary feet; yet oft they quit The dank, and, rising on stiff pennons, tower The mid aërial sky: others on ground Walk'd firm; the crested cock, whose clarion sounds The silent hours; and the other, whose gay train Adorns him, colour'd with the florid hue Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus With fish replenish'd, and the air with fowl, Evening and morn solemnized the fifth day.

"The sixth, and of creation last, arose
With evening harps and matin; when God said,
'Let the earth bring forth soul living in her kind,
Cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth,
Each in their kind.' The earth obey'd, and straight
Opening her fertile womb, teem'd at a birth
Innumerous living creatures, perfect forms,
Limb'd and full-grown: out of the ground up rose,



As from his lair, the wild beast, where he wons In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den; Among the trees in pairs they rose, and walk'd; The cattle in the fields and meadows green: Those rare and solitary, these in flocks Pasturing at once, and in broad herds upsprung. The grassy clods now calved; now half appear'd The tawny lion, pawing to get free

His hinder parts, then springs, as broke from bonds. And rampant shakes his brinded mane; the ounce, The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw In hillocks: the swift stag from under ground Bore up his branching head; scarce from his mould Behemoth, biggest born of earth, upheaved His vastness; fleeced the flocks, and bleating, rose As plants: ambiguous between sea and land, The river-horse, and scaly crocodile. At once came forth whatever creeps the ground, Insect or worm: those waved their limber fans For wings, and smallest lineaments exact In all the liveries deck'd of summer's pride, With spots of gold and purple, azure and green: These, as a line, their long dimension drew, Streaking the ground with sinuous trace: not all Minims of nature; some of serpent kind, Wondrous in length and corpulence, involved Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept The parsimonious emmet, provident Of future; in small room large heart enclosed; Pattern of just equality, perhaps, Hereafter, join'd in her popular tribes Of commonalty: swarming, next appear'd The female bee, that feeds her husband drone Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells With honey stored: the rest are numberless, And thou their natures know'st, and gavest them names, Needless to thee repeated; nor unknown The serpent, subtlest beast of all the field, Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes And hairy mane terrific, though to thee Not noxious, but obedient at thy call.

"Now heaven in all her glory shone, and roll'd Her motions, as the great first Mover's hand First wheel'd their course: earth in her rich attire Consummate lovely smiled; air, water, earth, By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walk'd, Frequent; and of the sixth day yet remain'd: There wanted yet the master-work, the end Of all yet done; a creature, who, not prone And brute, as other creatures, but endued With sanctity of reason, might erect His stature, and upright, with front serene, Govern the rest, self-knowing; and from thence Magnanimous, to correspond with heaven; But grateful to acknowledge whence his good Descends; thither, with heart, and voice, and eyes, Directed in devotion, to adore And worship God Supreme, who made him chief Of all his works: therefore the Omnipotent Eternal Father (for where is not he Present?) thus to his Son audibly spake:

"'Let us make now man in our image, man
In our similitude, and let them rule
Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,
Beast of the field, and over all the earth,
And every creeping thing that creeps the ground.'
This said, he form'd thee, Adam, thee, O man,
Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed
The breath of life; in his own image he
Created thee, in the image of God
Express; and thou becamest a living soul.
Male he created thee; but thy consort,
Female, for race; then bless'd mankind, and said,
'Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth,
Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold

Over fish of the sea, and fowl of the air,
And every living thing that moves on the earth.
Wherever thus created, for no place
Is yet distinct by name, hence, as thou know'st,
He brought thee into this delicious grove,
This garden planted with the trees of God,
Delectable both to behold and taste;
And freely all their pleasant fruit for food
Gave thee: all sorts are here that all the earth yields,
Variety without end; but of the tree,
Which, tasted, works knowledge of good and evil,
Thou may'st not; in the day thou eat'st, thou diest:
Death is the penalty imposed: beware,
And govern well thy appetite; lest Sin
Surprise thee, and her black attendant, Death.

"Here finish'd he, and all that he had made View'd, and behold all was entirely good; So even and morn accomplish'd the sixth day: Yet not till the Creator, from his work Desisting, though unwearied, up return'd, Up to the heaven of heavens, his high abode, Thence to behold this new-created world, The addition of his empire, how it show'd In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair, Answering his great idea. Up he rode, Follow'd with acclamation, and the sound Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned Angelic harmonies: the earth, the air Resounded (thou remember'st, for thou heard'st), The heavens and all the constellations rung. The planets in their station listening stood, While the bright pomp ascended jubilant. 'Open, ye everlasting gates!' they sung; 'Open, ye heavens! your living doors; let in

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The great Creator, from his work return'd Magnificent, his six days' work, a world: Open, and henceforth oft; for God will deign To visit oft the dwellings of just men, Delighted; and with frequent intercourse Thither will send his winged messengers On errands of supernal grace,' So sung The glorious train ascending: he, through heaven, That open'd wide her blazing portals, led To God's eternal house direct the way: A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold, And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear, Seen in the galaxy, that milky way Which nightly, as a circling zone, thou seest Powder'd with stars. And now on earth the seventh Evening arose in Eden, for the sun Was set, and twilight from the east came on, Forerunning night; when at the holy mount Of heaven's high-seated top, the imperial throne Of Godhead fix'd for ever firm and sure, The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down With his great Father: for he also went Invisible, yet stay'd (such privilege Hath Omnipresence), and the work ordain'd, Author and end of all things: and, from work Now resting, bless'd and hallow'd the seventh day, As resting on that day from all his work; But not in silence holy kept: the harp Had work, and rested not; the solemn pipe, And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop, All sounds on fret by string or golden wire, Temper'd soft tunings, intermix'd with voice Choral or unison: of incense clouds, Fuming from golden censers, hid the mount.

Creation and the six days' acts they sung: Great are thy works, Jehovah! infinite Thy power! what thought can measure thee, or tongue Relate thee? Greater now in thy return Than from the giant angels: thee that day Thy thunders magnified; but to create Is greater than, created, to destroy. Who can impair thee, Mighty King, or bound Thy empire? Easily the proud attempt Of spirits apostate, and their counsels vain, Thou hast repell'd; while impiously they thought Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw The number of thy worshippers. Who seeks To lessen thee, against his purpose serves To manifest the more thy might: his evil Thou usest, and from thence createst more good. Witness this new-made world, another heaven, From heaven-gate not far, founded, in view, On the clear hyaline, the glassy sea; Of amplitude almost immense, with stars Numerous, and every star, perhaps, a world Of destined habitation; but thou know'st Their seasons: among these the seat of men, Earth with her nether ocean circumfused, Their pleasant dwelling-place. Thrice happy men And sons of men, whom God hath thus advanced! Created in his image there to dwell And worship him; and in reward to rule Over his works, on earth, in sea, or air, And multiply a race of worshippers Holy and just: thrice happy, if they know Their happiness, and persevere upright!' "So sung they, and the empyréan rung With hallelujahs: thus was sabbath kept.

And thy request think now fulfill'd, that ask'd How first this world and face of things began, And what before thy memory was done From the beginning: that posterity, Inform'd by thee, might know: if else thou seek'st Aught not surpassing human measure, say."

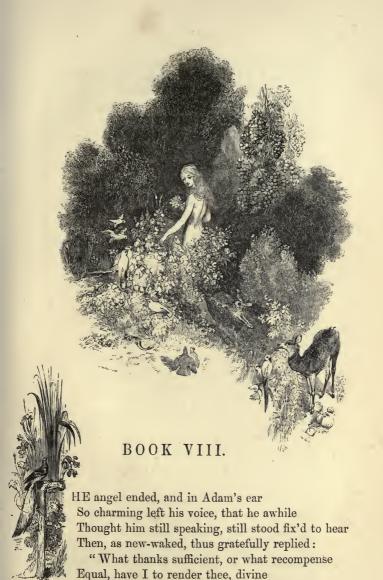


PARADISE LOST.

BOOK VIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Adam inquires concerning celestial motions; is doubtfully answered, and exhorted to search rather things more worthy of knowledge; Adam assents; and, still desirous to detain Raphael, relates to him what he remembered since his own creation; his placing in Paradise; his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society; his first meeting and nuptials with Eve; his discourse with the angel thereupon, who, after admonitions repeated, departs.



Historian, who thus largely hast allay'd The thirst I had of knowledge, and vouchsafed This friendly condescension, to relate Things else by me unsearchable; now heard With wonder, but delight, and, as is due, With glory attributed to the high Creator? Something yet of doubt remains, Which only thy solution can resolve. When I behold this goodly frame, this world, Of heaven and earth consisting, and compute Their magnitudes; this earth, a spot, a grain, An atom, with the firmament compared And all her number'd stars, that seem to roll Spaces incomprehensible (for such Their distance argues, and their swift return Diurnal), merely to officiate light Round this opacous earth, this punctual spot, One day and night; in all their vast survey Useless besides; reasoning, I oft admire, How Nature, wise and frugal, could commit Such disproportions, with superfluous hand So many nobler bodies to create, Greater, so manifold, to this one use, For aught appears, and on their orbs impose Such restless revolution, day by day Repeated; while the sedentary earth, That better might with far less compass move, Served by more noble than herself, attains Her end without least motion, and receives, As tribute, such a sumless journey brought Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light; Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails." So spake our sire, and by his countenance seem'd Entering on studious thoughts abstruse; which Eve Perceiving, where she sat retired in sight, With lowliness majestic from her seat, And grace that won who saw to wish her stay, Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers, To visit how they prosper'd, bud and bloom, Her nursery; they at her coming sprung, And, touch'd by her fair tendance, gladlier grew. Yet went she not, as not with such discourse Delighted, or not capable her ear Of what was high: such pleasure she reserved, Adam relating, she sole auditress; Her husband the relater she preferr'd Before the angel, and of him to ask Chose rather; he, she knew, would intermix Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute With conjugal caresses: from his lip Not words alone pleased her. O! when meet now Such pairs, in love and mutual honour join'd? With goddess-like demeanour forth she went, Not unattended; for on her, as queen, A pomp of winning graces waited still, And from about her shot darts of desire Into all eyes, to wish her still in sight. And Raphael now, to Adam's doubt proposed, Benevolent and facile thus replied:

"To ask or search, I blame thee not; for heaven Is as the book of God before thee set, Wherein to read his wondrous works, and learn His seasons, hours, or days, or months, or years: This to attain, whether heaven move or earth, Imports not, if thou reckon right; the rest From man or angel the great Architect Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge His secrets, to be scann'd by them who ought

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Rather admire; or, if they list to try Conjecture, he his fabric of the heavens Hath left to their disputes; perhaps to move His laughter at their quaint opinions wide Hereafter: when they come to model heaven, And calculate the stars; how they will wield The mighty frame; how build, unbuild, contrive, To save appearances; how gird the sphere With centric and eccentric scribbled o'er, Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb. Already by thy reasoning this I guess, Who art to lead thy offspring, and supposest That bodies bright and greater should not serve The less, not bright; nor heaven such journeys run, Earth sitting still, when she alone receives Consider first, that great The benefit. Or bright infers not excellence: the earth, Though, in comparison of heaven, so small, Nor glistering, may of solid good contain More plenty than the sun that barren shines; Whose virtue on itself works no effect, But in the fruitful earth; there first received, His beams, inactive else, their vigour find. Yet not to earth are those bright luminaries Officious: but to thee, earth's habitant. And for the heavens' wide circuit, let it speak The Maker's high magnificence, who built So spacious, and his line stretch'd out so far, That man may know he dwells not in his own: An edifice too large for him to fill, Lodged in a small partition; and the rest Ordain'd for uses to his Lord best known. The swiftness of those circles attribute, Though numberless, to his omnipotence,

That to corporeal substances could add Speed almost spiritual. Me thou think'st not slow, Who since the morning hour set out from heaven, Where God resides, and ere mid-day arrived In Eden; distance inexpressible By numbers that have name. But this I urge, Admitting motion in the heavens, to show Invalid that which thee to doubt it moved; Not that I so affirm, though so it seem To thee who hast thy dwelling here on earth. God, to remove his ways from human sense, Placed heaven from earth so far, that earthly sight, If it presume, might err in things too high, And no advantage gain. What if the sun Be centre to the world, and other stars, By his attractive virtue and their own Incited, dance about him various rounds? Their wandering course now high, now low, then hid, Progressive, retrograde, or standing still, In six thou seest; and what if, seventh to these, The planet earth, so steadfast though she seem, Insensibly three different motions move? Which else to several spheres thou must ascribe, Moved contrary with thwart obliquities; Or save the sun his labour, and that swift Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb supposed, Invisible else above all stars, the wheel Of day and night; which needs not thy belief, If earth, industrious of herself, fetch day Travelling east, and with her part averse From the sun's beam meet night, her other part Still luminous by his ray. What if that light, Sent from her through the wide transpicuous air, To the terrestrial moon be as a star,

Enlightening her by day, as she by night This earth? reciprocal, if land be there, Fields and inhabitants. Her spots thou seest As clouds, and clouds may rain, and rain produce Fruits in her soften'd soil, for some to eat Allotted there; and other suns, perhaps, With their attendant moons, thou wilt descry, Communicating male and female light, Which two great sexes animate the world, Stored in each orb, perhaps, with some that live: For such vast room in nature unpossess'd By living soul, desert and desolate, Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute Each orb a glimpse of light, conveyed so far Down to this habitable, which returns Light back to them, is obvious to dispute. But whether thus these things, or whether not; Whether the sun, predominant in heaven, Rise on the earth, or earth rise on the sun: He from the east his flaming road begin, Or she from west her silent course advance, With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps On her soft axle, while she paces even, And bears thee soft with the smooth air along, Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid; Leave them to God above: him serve and fear. Of other creatures, as him pleases best, Wherever placed, let him dispose: joy thou In what he gives to thee, this Paradise And thy fair Eve; heaven is for thee too high To know what passes there; be lowly wise: Think only what concerns thee, and thy being; Dream not of other worlds: what creatures there Live in what state, condition, or degree;

Contented that thus far hath been reveal'd Not of earth only, but of highest heaven."

To whom thus Adam, clear'd of doubt, replied: "How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure Intelligence of heaven, angel serene! And, freed from intricacies, taught to live The easiest way; nor with perplexing thoughts To interrupt the sweet of life, from which God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares, And not molest us; unless we ourselves Seek them with wandering thoughts, and notions vain. But apt the mind or fancy is to rove Uncheck'd, and of her roving is no end; Till warn'd, or by experience taught, she learn, That not to know at large of things remote From use, obscure and subtle, but to know That which before us lies in daily life, Is the prime wisdom: what is more, is fume, Or emptiness, or fond impertinence; And renders us, in things that most concern, Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek. Therefore from this high pitch let us descend A lower flight, and speak of things at hand Useful; whence, haply, mention may arise Of something not unseasonable to ask, By sufferance, and thy wonted favour, deign'd. Thee I have heard relating what was done Ere my remembrance: now, hear me relate My story, which, perhaps, thou hast not heard; And day is yet not spent; till then thou seest How subtly to detain thee I devise, Inviting thee to hear while I relate; Fond, were it not in hope of thy reply: For, while I sit with thee, I seem in heaven;

And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
Than fruits of palm-tree pleasantest to thirst
And hunger both, from labour, at the hour
Of sweet repast; they satiate, and soon fill,
Though pleasant; but thy words, with grace divine
Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety."

To whom thus Raphael answer'd, heavenly meek: "Nor are thy lips ungraceful, sire of men, Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee Abundantly his gifts hath also pour'd, Inward and outward both, his image fair: Speaking, or mute, all comeliness and grace Attends thee; and each word, each motion, forms: Nor less think we in heaven of thee on earth Than of our fellow-servant, and inquire Gladly into the ways of God with man; For God, we see, hath honour'd thee, and set On man his equal love: say therefore on; For I that day was absent, as befell, Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure, Far on excursion toward the gates of hell; Squared in full legion (such command we had), To see that none thence issued forth a spy, Or enemy, while God was in his work; Lest he, incensed at such eruption bold, Destruction with creation might have mix'd. Not that they durst without his leave attempt: But us he sends upon his high behests For state, as sovereign King, and to inure Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut, The dismal gates, and barricadoed strong; But, long ere our approaching, heard within Noise, other than the sound of dance or song; Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.

Glad we return'd up to the coasts of light

Ere sabbath evening: so we had in charge.

But thy relation now; for I attend,

Pleased with thy words no less than thou with mine."

So spake the godlike power, and thus our sire: "For man to tell how human life began Is hard; for who himself beginning knew? Desire with thee still longer to converse Induced me. As new waked from soundest sleep, Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid, In balmy sweat; which with his beams the sun Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed. Straight toward heaven my wondering eyes I turn'd, And gazed awhile the ample sky; till, raised By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung, As thitherward endeavouring, and upright Stood on my feet: about me round I saw Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains, And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these, Creatures that lived and moved, and walk'd or flew; Birds on the branches warbling; all things smiled; With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflow'd. Myself I then perused, and limb by limb Survey'd, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran With supple joints, as lively vigour led: But who I was, or where, or from what cause, Knew not. To speak I tried, and forthwith spake; My tongue obey'd, and readily could name Whate'er I saw. 'Thou sun,' said I, 'fair light, And thou enlighten'd earth, so fresh and gay, Ye hills, and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains, And ye that live and move, fair creatures, tell, Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here? Not of myself; by some great Maker then,

In goodness and in power pre-eminent: Tell me how may I know him, how adore, From whom I have that thus I move and live, And feel that I am happier than I know?' While thus I call'd, and stray'd I knew not whither, From where I first drew air, and first beheld This happy light; when answer none return'd, On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers, Pensive I sat me down: there gentle sleep First found me, and with soft oppression seized My drowsed sense; untroubled, though I thought I then was passing to my former state Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve: When suddenly stood at my head a dream, Whose inward apparition gently moved My fancy to believe I yet had being, And lived: one came, methought, of shape divine, And said, 'Thy mansion wants thee, Adam; rise, First man, of men innumerable ordain'd First father! call'd by thee, I come thy guide To the garden of bliss, thy seat prepared.' So saying, by the hand he took me, raised, And over fields and waters, as in air Smooth sliding without step, last led me up A woody mountain; whose high top was plain, A circuit wide enclosed, with goodliest trees Planted, with walks and bowers; that what I saw Of earth before scarce pleasant seem'd. Each tree, Loaden with fairest fruit, that hung to the eye Tempting, stirr'd in me sudden appetite To pluck and eat; whereat I waked, and found Before mine eyes all real, as the dream Had lively shadow'd. Here had new begun My wandering, had not he, who was my guide

Up hither, from among the trees appear'd, Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe, In adoration at his feet I fell [am,' Submiss: he rear'd me, and 'Whom thou sought'st I Said mildly, 'Author of all this thou seest Above, or round about thee, or beneath. This Paradise I give thee; count it thine To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat: Of every tree that in the garden grows Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth: But of the tree, whose operation brings Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith, Amid the garden, by the tree of life-Remember what I warn thee—shun to taste, And shun the bitter consequence: for know, The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command Transgress'd, inevitably thou shalt die, From that day mortal; and this happy state Shalt lose, expell'd from hence into a world Of woe and sorrow.' Sternly he pronounced The rigid interdiction, which resounds Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice Not to incur; but soon his clear aspéct Return'd, and gracious purpose thus renew'd: 'Not only these fair bounds, but all the earth To thee and to thy race I give; as lords Possess it, and all things that therein live. Or live in sea, or air; beast, fish, and fowl. In sign whereof, each bird and beast behold After their kinds; I bring them to receive From thee their names, and pay thee fealty With low subjection; understand the same Of fish within their watery residence,

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Not hither summon'd, since they cannot change Their element to draw the thinner air.' As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold, Approaching two and two; these cowering low With blandishment; each bird stoop'd on his wing. I named them as they pass'd, and understood Their nature; with such knowledge God endued My sudden apprehension: but in these

I found not what methought I wanted still; And to the heavenly vision thus presumed:

"'O, by what name, for thou above all these, Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher, Surpassest far my naming; how may I Adore thee, Author of this universe, And all this good to man? for whose well-being So amply, and with hands so liberal, Thou hast provided all things; but with me I see not who partakes. In solitude What happiness? who can enjoy alone, Or, all enjoying, what contentment find?' Thus I, presumptuous; and the vision bright, As with a smile more brighten'd, thus replied:

"'What call'st thou solitude? Is not the earth With various living creatures, and the air, Replenish'd, and all these at thy command To come and play before thee? Know'st thou not Their language and their ways? They also know, And reason not contemptibly; with these Find pastime, and bear rule; thy realm is large.' So spake the Universal Lord, and seem'd So ordering: I, with leave of speech implored, And humble deprecation, thus replied:

"'Let not my words offend thee, heavenly Power; My Maker, be propitious while I speak. Hast thou not made me here thy substitute, And these inferior far beneath me set? Among unequals what society Can sort, what harmony, or true delight? Which must be mutual, in proportion due Given and received; but, in disparity, The one intense, the other still remiss, Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove

Tedious alike: of fellowship I speak
Such as I seek, fit to participate
All rational delight, wherein the brute
Cannot be human consort: they rejoice
Each with their kind, lion with lioness;
So fitly them in pairs thou hast combined:
Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl,
So well converse, nor with the ox the ape;
Worse, then, can man with beast, and least of all.'

"Whereto the Almighty answer'd, not displeased:
'A nice and subtle happiness, I see,
Thou to thyself proposest, in the choice
Of thy associates, Adam! and wilt taste
No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary.
What think'st thou, then, of me, and this my state?
Seem I to thee sufficiently possess'd
Of happiness, or not, who am alone
From all eternity? for none I know
Second to me, or like, equal much less.
How have I, then, with whom to hold converse,
Save with the creatures which I made, and those
To me inferior, infinite descents
Beneath what other creatures are to thee?'

"He ceased; I lowly answered: 'To attain
The height and depth of thy eternal ways
All human thoughts come short, Supreme of things!
Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
Is no deficience found: not so is man,
But in degree; the cause of his desire,
By conversation with his like, to help
Or solace his defects. No need that thou
Shouldst propagate, already infinite,
And through all numbers absolute, though one;
But man by number is to manifest

His single imperfection, and beget
Like of his like, his image multiplied,
In unity defective; which requires
Collateral love, and dearest amity.
Thou in thy secrecy, although alone,
Best with thyself accompanied, seek'st not
Social communication; yet, so pleased,
Canst raise thy creature to what height thou wilt
Of union or communion, deified:
I, by conversing, cannot these erect
From prone; nor in their ways complacence find.'
Thus I, embolden'd, spake, and freedom used
Permissive, and acceptance found; which gain'd
This answer from the gracious voice divine:

"'Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleased; And find thee knowing, not of beasts alone, Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself; Expressing well the spirit within thee free, My image, not imparted to the brute: Whose fellowship, therefore, unmeet for thee, Good reason was thou freely shouldst dislike; And be so minded still: I, ere thou spakest, Knew it not good for man to be alone; And no such company as then thou saw'st Intended thee; for trial only brought, To see how thou couldst judge of fit and meet: What next I bring shall please thee, be assured, Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self, Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire.'

"He ended, or I heard no more; for now
My earthly by his heavenly overpower'd,
Which it had long stood under, strain'd to the height
In that celestial colloquy sublime,
As with an object that excels the sense,
Dazzled and spent, sunk down, and sought repair

Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, call'd By Nature as in aid, and closed mine eyes. Mine eyes he closed, but open left the cell Of fancy, my internal sight; by which, Abstract, as in a trance, methought I saw, Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape Still glorious before whom awake I stood; Who, stooping, open'd my left side, and took From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm, And life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound, But suddenly with flesh fill'd up and heal'd; The rib he form'd and fashion'd with his hands; Under his forming hands a creature grew, Man-like, but different sex; so lovely fair, That what seem'd fair in all the world, seem'd now Mean, or in her summ'd up, in her contain'd, And in her looks; which, from that time, infused Sweetness into my heart unfelt before, And into all things, from her air, inspired The spirit of love and amorous delight. She disappear'd, and left me dark; I waked To find her, or for ever to deplore Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure; When out of hope, behold her, not far off, Such as I saw her in my dream, adorn'd With what all earth or heaven could bestow To make her amiable: on she came, Led by her heavenly Maker, though unseen, And guided by his voice; nor uninform'd Of nuptial sanctity, and marriage rites: Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye, In every gesture dignity and love. I, overjoy'd, could not forbear aloud: "'This turn hath made amends: thou hast fulfill'd

Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,

Giver of all things fair! but fairest this
Of all thy gifts: nor enviest. I now see
Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself
Before me. Woman is her name; of man
Extracted: for this cause he shall forego
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere;
And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul!'

"She heard me thus: and, though divinely brought, Yet innocence, and virgin modesty, Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth. That would be wooed, and not unsought be won, Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired, The more desirable; or, to say all, Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought, Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turn'd; I follow'd her; she what was honour knew, And with obsequious majesty approved My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower I led her, blushing like the morn: all heaven, And happy constellations, on that hour Shed their selectest influence: the earth Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill; Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs Whisper'd it to the woods, and from their wings Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub, Disporting, till the amorous bird of night Sung spousal, and bid haste the evening star, On his hill-top, to light the bridal lamp.

"Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought My story to the sum of earthly bliss, Which I enjoy; and must confess to find In all things else delight indeed, but such As, used or not, works in the mind no change, Nor vehement desire; these delicacies I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flowers,

Walks, and the melody of birds: but here Far otherwise, transported I behold, Transported touch; here passion first I felt, Commotion strange! in all enjoyments else Superior and unmoved; here only weak Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance. Or nature fail'd in me, and left some part Not proof enough such object to sustain; Or, from my side subducting, took, perhaps, More than enough; at least on her bestow'd Too much of ornament, in outward show Elaborate, of inward less exact. For well I understand, in the prime end Of nature, her the inferior in the mind And inward faculties, which most excel; In outward, also, her resembling less His image who made both, and less expressing The character of that dominion given O'er other creatures: yet, when I approach Her loveliness, so absolute she seems, And in herself complete, so well to know Her own, that what she wills to do or say Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best. All higher knowledge in her presence falls Degraded: wisdom in discourse with her Loses, discountenanced, and like folly shows: Authority and reason on her wait, As one intended first, not after made Occasionally; and, to consummate all, Greatness of mind, and nobleness, their seat Build in her loveliest, and create an awe About her, as a guard angelic placed."

To whom the angel, with contracted brow: "Accuse not Nature; she hath done her part, Do thou but thine; and be not diffident

Of wisdom: she deserts thee not, if thou Dismiss not her, when most thou need'st her nigh, By attributing overmuch to things Less excellent, as thou thyself perceivest. For, what admirest thou, what transports thee so? An outside; fair, no doubt, and worthy well Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love; Not thy subjection; weigh with her thyself; Then value. Oft-times nothing profits more Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right Well managed; of that skill, the more thou know'st, The more she will acknowledge thee her head, And to realities yield all her shows: Made so adorn for thy delight the more, So awful, that with honour thou may'st love Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise. But if the sense of touch, whereby mankind Is propagated, seem such dear delight Beyond all other, think the same vouchsafed To cattle and each beast; which would not be To them made common and divulged, if aught Therein enjoy'd were worthy to subdue The soul of man, or passion in him move. What higher in her society thou find'st Attractive, human, rational, love still: In loving thou dost well, in passion not, Wherein true love consists not. Love refines The thoughts, and heart enlarges; hath his seat In reason, and is judicious; is the scale By which to heavenly love thou may'st ascend. Not sunk in carnal pleasure; for which cause, Among the beasts no mate for thee was found." To whom thus, half abash'd, Adam replied:

"Neither her outside, form'd so fair, nor aught

In procreation, common to all kinds (Though higher of the genial bed by far, And with mysterious reverence I deem), So much delights me, as those graceful acts, Those thousand decencies, that daily flow From all her words and actions, mix'd with love And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd Union of mind, or in us both one soul: Harmony to behold in wedded pair More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear. Yet these subject not: I to thee disclose What inward thence I feel, not therefore foil'd, Who meet with various objects, from the sense. Variously representing; yet, still free, Approve the best, and follow what I approve. To love thou blamest me not; for love, thou say'st, Leads up to heaven, is both the way and guide: Bear with me, then, if lawful what I ask: Love not the heavenly spirits, and how their love Express they, by looks only, or do they mix Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?"

To whom the angel, with a smile that glow'd Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue,
Answer'd. "Let it suffice thee that thou know'st
Us happy, and without love no happiness.
Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
(And pure thou wert created), we enjoy
In eminence, and obstacle find none
Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars.
Easier than air with air, if spirits embrace,
Total they mix, union of pure with pure
Desiring; nor restrain'd conveyance need,
As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.
But I can now no more; the parting sun,

Beyond the earth's green cape and verdant isles Hesperian, sets; my signal to depart.

Be strong, live happy, and love; but, first of all, Him, whom to love is to obey; and keep
His great command: take heed lest passion sway
Thy judgment to do aught which, else, free-will
Would not admit: thine, and of all thy sons,
The weal or woe in thee is placed; beware!
I in thy persevering shall rejoice,
And all the blest: stand fast; to stand or fall
Free in thine own arbitrement it lies.
Perfect within, no outward aid require;
And all temptation to transgress repel."

So saying, he arose; whom Adam thus Follow'd with benediction. "Since to part, Go, heavenly guest, ethereal messenger, Sent from whose sovereign goodness I adore! Gentle to me and affable hath been Thy condescension, and shall be honour'd ever With grateful memory: thou to mankind Be good and friendly still, and oft return!"

So parted they: the angel up to heaven From the thick shade, and Adam to his bower.



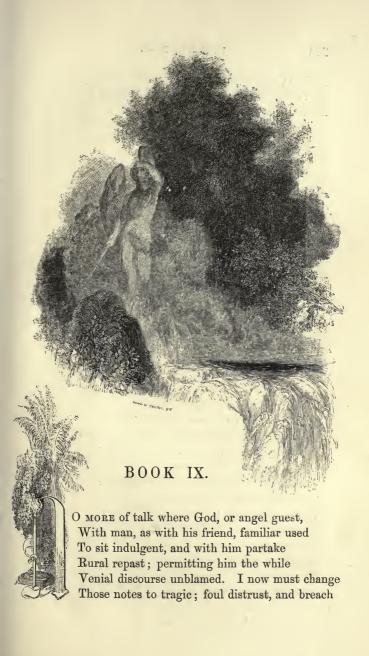


PARADISE LOST.

BOOK IX.

THE ARGUMENT.

Satan, having compassed the earth, with meditated guile returns, as a mist, by night, into Paradise; enters into the serpent sleeping. Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their labours, which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each labouring apart : Adam consents not, alleging the danger lest that enemy, of whom they were forewarned, should attempt her, found alone. Eve, loth to be thought not circumspect or firm enough, urges her going apart, the rather desirous to make trial of her strength; Adam at last yields; the serpent finds her alone: his subtle approach, first gazing, then speaking; with much flattery extolling Eve above all other creatures. Eve, wondering to hear the serpent speak, asks how he attained to human speech, and such understanding, not till now: the serpent answers that, by tasting of a certain tree in the garden, he attained both to speech and reason, till then void of both. Eve requires him to bring her to that tree, and finds it to be the tree of knowledge, forbidden: the serpent, now grown bolder, with many wiles and arguments, induces her at length to eat; she, pleased with the taste, deliberates awhile whether to impart thereof to Adam or not; at last brings him of the fruit: relates what persuaded her to eat thereof. Adam, at first amazed, but perceiving her lost, resolves, through vehemence of love, to perish with her; and, extenuating the trespass, eats also of the fruit: the effects thereof in them both; they seek to cover their nakedness; then fall to variance and accusation of one another.



Disloyal, on the part of man, revolt And disobedience: on the part of Heaven, Now alienated, distance and distaste, Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given, That brought into this world a world of woe, Sin and her shadow, Death and Misery, Death's harbinger. Sad task! yet argument Not less, but more heroic than the wrath Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued, Thrice fugitive, about Troy wall; or rage Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused; Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long Perplex'd the Greek, and Cytherea's son; If answerable style I can obtain Of my celestial patroness, who deigns Her nightly visitation unimplored, And dictates to me slumbering; or inspires Easy my unpremeditated verse: Since first this subject for heroic song Pleased me, long choosing and beginning late; Not sedulous by nature to indite Wars, hitherto the only argument Heroic deem'd; chief mastery to dissect, With long and tedious havoc, fabled knights, In battles feign'd; the better fortitude Of patience and heroic martyrdom Unsung; or to describe races and games, Or tilting furniture, emblazon'd shields, Impresses quaint, caparisons and steeds, Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights At joust and tournament; then marshall'd feast Served up in hall with sewers and seneschals; The skill of artifice or office mean, Not that which justly gives heroic name

To person or to poem. Me, of these Nor skill'd nor studious, higher argument Remains; sufficient of itself to raise That name, unless an age too late, or cold Climate, or years, damp my intended wing Depress'd; and much they may, if all be my, Not hers, who brings it nightly to my ear.

The sun was sunk, and after him the star Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring Twilight upon the earth, short arbiter 'Twixt day and night; and now, from end to end, Night's hemisphere had veil'd the horizon round; When Satan, who late fled before the threats Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved In meditated fraud and malice, bent On man's destruction, maugre what might hap Of heavier on himself, fearless return'd. By night he fled, and at midnight return'd From compassing the earth; cautious of day, Since Uriel, regent of the sun, descried His entrance, and forewarn'd the cherubim That kept their watch; thence, full of anguish, driven, The space of seven continued nights he rode With darkness: thrice the equinoctial line He circled; four times cross'd the car of night From pole to pole, travérsing each colúre; On the eighth return'd, and, on the coast averse From entrance or cherubic watch, by stealth Found unsuspected way. There was a place, Now not; though sin, not time, first wrought the change, Where Tigris, at the foot of Paradise, Into a gulf shot under ground, till part Rose up a fountain by the tree of life: In with the river sunk, and with it rose,

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Satan, involved in rising mist; then sought Where to lie hid; sea he had search'd, and land From Eden over Pontus, and the pool Mæotis, up beyond the river Ob; Downward as far antarctic: and, in length, West from Orontes to the ocean barr'd At Darien; thence to the land where flow Ganges and Indus: thus the orb he roam'd With narrow search; and with inspection deep, Consider'd every creature, which of all Most opportune might serve his wiles; and found The serpent subtlest beast of all the field. Him, after long debate, irresolute, Of thoughts revolved, his final sentence chose, Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom To enter, and his dark suggestions hide From sharpest sight: for, in the wily snake, Whatever sleights, none would suspicious mark, As from his wit and native subtlety Proceeding; which, in other beasts observed, Doubt might beget of diabolic power Active within, beyond the sense of brute. Thus he resolved; but first, from inward grief, His bursting passion into plaints thus pour'd:

"O earth, how like to heaven, if not preferr'd More justly, seat worthier of gods, as built With second thoughts, reforming what was old! For what god, after better, worse would build? Terrestrial heaven, danced round by other heavens That shine, yet bear their bright officious lamps, Light above light, for thee alone, as seems In thee concentring all their precious beams Of sacred influence! As God in heaven Is centre, yet extends to all; so thou,

Centring, receivest from all those orbs: in thee, Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth Of creatures animate with gradual life Of growth, sense, reason, all summ'd up in man. With what delight could I have walk'd thee round. If I could joy in aught! sweet interchange Of hill, and valley, rivers, woods, and plains, Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crown'd, Rocks, dens, and caves! But I in none of these Find place or refuge: and the more I see Pleasures about me, so much more I feel Torment within me, as from the hateful siege Of contraries. All good to me becomes Bane, and in heaven much worse would be my state. But neither here seek I, no, nor in heaven, To dwell, unless by mastering heaven's Supreme: Nor hope to be myself less miserable By what I seek, but others to make such As I, though thereby worse to me redound: For only in destroying I find ease To my relentless thoughts; and, him destroy'd, Or won to what may work his utter loss, For whom all this was made, all this will soon Follow, as to him link'd in weal or woe: In woe then; that destruction wide may range. To me shall be the glory sole among The infernal powers, in one day to have marr'd What he, Almighty styled, six nights and days Continued making; and who knows how long Before had been contriving? though, perhaps, Not longer than since I, in one night, freed, From servitude inglorious, well nigh half The angelic name, and thinner left the throng

Of his adorers: he, to be avenged, And to repair his numbers thus impair'd, Whether such virtue, spent of old, now fail'd More angels to create, if they at least Are his created; or, to spite us more, Determined to advance into our room A creature form'd of earth; and him endow, Exalted from so base original, With heavenly spoils, our spoils: what he decreed, He effected; man he made, and for him built, Magnificent, this world, and earth his seat, Him lord pronounced: and, O indignity! Subjected to his service, angel-wings, And flaming ministers, to watch and tend Their earthly charge: of these the vigilance I dread; and, to elude, thus wrapt in mist Of midnight vapour, glide obscure, and pry In every bush and brake, where hap may find The serpent sleeping, in whose mazy folds To hide me, and the dark intent I bring. O foul descent! that I, who erst contended With gods to sit the highest, am now constrain'd Into a beast; and, mix'd with bestial slime, This essence to incarnate and imbrute, That to the height of deity aspired! But what will not ambition and revenge Descend to? Who aspires, must down as low As high he soar'd, obnoxious, first or last, To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet, Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils: Let it; I reck not, so it light well aim'd, Since higher I fall short, on him who next Provokes my envy, this new favourite Of heaven, this man of clay, son of despite;

Whom, us the more to spite, his Maker raised From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid."

So saying, through each thicket, dank or dry, Like a black mist, low creeping, he held on His midnight search, where soonest he might find The serpent: him, fast sleeping, soon he found In labyrinth of many a round, self-roll'd, His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles: Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den, Nor nocent yet; but, on the grassy herb, Fearless, unfear'd, he slept: in at his mouth The devil enter'd, and his brutal sense, In heart or head, possessing, soon inspired With act intelligential; but his sleep Disturb'd not, waiting close the approach of morn.

Now, when as sacred light began to dawn
In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed
Their morning incense, when all things that breathe,
From the earth's great altar, send up silent praise
To the Creator, and his nostrils fill
With grateful smell, forth came the human pair,
And join'd their vocal worship to the quire
Of creatures wanting voice; that done, partake
The season, prime for sweetest scents and airs:
Then commune, how that day they best may ply
Their growing work; for much their work outgrew
The hands' dispatch of two, gardening so wide;
And Eve first to her husband thus began:

"Adam, well may we labour still to dress
This garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flower,
Our pleasant task enjoin'd; but, till more hands
Aid us, the work under our labour grows,
Luxurious by restraint; what we by day
Lop, overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,

One night or two with wanton growth derides,
Tending to wild. Thou, therefore, now advise,
Or hear what to my mind first thoughts present:
Let us divide our labours; thou, where choice
Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind
The woodbine round this arbour, or direct
The clasping ivy where to climb; while I,
In yonder spring of roses intermix'd
With myrtle, find what to redress till noon:
For, while so near each other thus all day
Our task we choose, what wonder if, so near,
Looks intervene, and smiles, or objects new
Casual discourse draw on; which intermits
Our day's work, brought to little, though begun
Early, and the hour of supper comes unearn'd?"

To whom mild answer Adam thus return'd: "Sole Eve, associate sole, to me, beyond Compare, above all living creatures dear! Well hast thou motion'd, well thy thoughts employ'd, How we might best fulfil the work which here God hath assign'd us; nor of me shalt pass Unpraised; for nothing lovelier can be found In woman, than to study household good, And good works in her husband to promote. Yet not so strictly hath our Lord imposed Labour, as to debar us when we need Refreshment, whether food or talk between, Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse Of looks and smiles; for smiles from reason flow, To brute denied, and are of love the food; Love, not the lowest end of human life. For not to irksome toil, but to delight, He made us, and delight to reason join'd. These paths and bowers doubt not but our joint hands Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide As we need walk; till younger hands ere long Assist us: but if much converse, perhaps, Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield: For solitude sometimes is best society, And short retirement urges sweet return. But other doubt possesses me, lest harm Befall thee, sever'd from me; for thou know'st What hath been warn'd us; what malicious foe, Envying our happiness, and of his own Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame By sly assault; and somewhere, nigh at hand, Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find His wish and best advantage, us asunder; Hopeless to circumvent us join'd, where each To other speedy aid might lend at need; Whether his first design be to withdraw Our fealty from God, or to disturb Conjugal love, than which, perhaps, no bliss Enjoy'd by us excites his envy more: Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side That gave thee being, still shades thee, and protects. The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks, Safest and seemliest by her husband stays, Who guards her, or with her the worst endures."

To whom the virgin majesty of Eve, As one who loves, and some unkindness meets, With sweet austere composure thus replied:

"Offspring of heaven and earth, and all earth's lord! That such an enemy we have, who seeks
Our ruin, both by thee inform'd I learn,
And from the parting angel overheard,
As in a shady nook I stood behind,
Just then return'd at shut of evening flowers.

But that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt
To God or thee, because we have a foe
May tempt it, I expected not to hear.
His violence thou fear'st not; being such
As we, not capable of death or pain,
Can either not receive, or can repel.
His fraud is, then, thy fear; which plain infers
Thy equal fear, that my firm faith and love
Can by his fraud be shaken or seduced:
Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy breast,
Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear?"

To whom, with healing words, Adam replied: "Daughter of God and man, immortal Eve! For such thou art, from sin and blame entire; Not diffident of thee, do I dissuade Thy absence from my sight; but to avoid The attempt itself, intended by our foe. For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses The tempted with dishonour foul; supposed Not incorruptible of faith, not proof Against temptation: thou thyself, with scorn And anger, wouldst-resent the offer'd wrong, Though ineffectual found: misdeem not, then, If such affront I labour to avert From thee alone, which on us both at once The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare; Or daring, first on me the assault shall light. Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn; Subtle he needs must be, who could seduce Angels; nor think superfluous others' aid. I, from the influence of thy looks, receive Access in every virtue: in thy sight More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on, Shame to be overcome or over-reach'd, Would utmost vigour raise, and raised, unite. Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel When I am present, and thy trial choose With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?"

So spake domestic Adam in his care, And matrimonial love; but Eve, who thought Less attributed to her faith sincere, Thus her reply with accent sweet renew'd:

"If this be our condition, thus to dwell In narrow circuit straiten'd by a foe, Subtle or violent, we not endued Single with like defence, wherever met, How are we happy, still in fear of harm? But harm precedes not sin; only our foe, Tempting, affronts us with his foul esteem Of our integrity: his foul esteem Sticks no dishonour on our front, but turns Foul on himself; then wherefore shunn'd or fear'd By us? who rather double honour gain From his surmise proved false; find peace within, Favour from Heaven, our witness, from the event. And what is faith, love, virtue, unassay'd Alone, without exterior help sustain'd? Let us not, then, suspect our happy state Left so imperfect by the Maker wise, As not secure to single or combined. Frail is our happiness, if this be so; And Eden were no Eden, thus exposed."

To whom thus Adam fervently replied: "O woman, best are all things as the will Of God ordain'd them: his creating hand Nothing imperfect, or deficient, left Of all that he created; much less man,

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Or aught that might his happy state secure, Secure from outward force. Within himself The danger lies, yet lies within his power: Against his will he can receive no harm. But God left free the will; for what obeys Reason is free; and reason he made right, But bid her well beware, and still erect; Lest, by some fair-appearing good surprised, She dictate false, and misinform the will To do what God expressly hath forbid. Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins, That I should mind thee oft; and mind thou me. Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve; Since reason not impossibly may meet Some specious object by the foe suborn'd, And fall into deception unaware, Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warn'd. Seek not temptation, then, which to avoid Were better, and most likely if from me Thou sever not: trial will come unsought. Wouldst thou approve thy constancy, approve First thy obedience; the other who can know? Not seeing thee attempted, who attest? But, if thou think trial unsought may find Us both securer than thus warn'd thou seem'st, Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more; Go in thy native innocence, rely On what thou hast of virtue; summon all: For God towards thee hath done his part, do thine." So spake the patriarch of mankind; but Eve

Persisted; yet submiss, though last, replied:
"With thy permission, then, and thus forewarn'd
Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
Touch'd only, that our trial, when least sought,

May find us both, perhaps, far less prepared, The willinger I go, nor much expect A foe so proud will first the weaker seek; So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse."

Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand Soft she withdrew, and, like a wood-nymph light, Oread, or Drvad, or of Delia's train. Betook her to the groves; but Delia's self, In gait surpass'd, and goddess-like deport, Though not as she with bow and quiver arm'd, But with such gardening tools as art, yet rude, Guiltless of fire, had form'd, or angels brought. To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorn'd, Likest she seem'd; Pomona, when she fled Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her prime, Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove. Her long, with ardent look, his eye pursued Delighted, but desiring more her stay. Oft he to her his charge of quick return Repeated: she to him as oft engaged To be return'd by noon amid the bower, And all things in best order to invite Noontide repast, or afternoon's repose. O much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve. Of thy presumed return! event perverse! Thou never from that hour in Paradise Found'st either sweet repast, or sound repose! Such ambush, hid among sweet flowers and shades, Waited, with hellish rancour imminent, To intercept thy way, or send thee back Despoil'd of innocence, of faith, of bliss! For now, and since first break of dawn, the fiend, Mere serpent in appearance, forth was come; And on his quest, where likeliest he might find

The only two of mankind, but in them The whole included race, his purposed prev. In bower and field he sought where any tuft Of grove or garden-plot more pleasant lay, Their tendance, or plantation for delight: By fountain or by shady rivulet He sought them both, but wish'd his hap might find Eve separate; he wish'd, but not with hope Of what so seldom chanced; when to his wish, Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies, Veil'd in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood, Half-spied, so thick the roses blushing round About her glow'd, oft stooping to support Each flower of tender stalk, whose head, though gay Carnation, purple, azure, or speck'd with gold, Hung drooping, unsustain'd; them she upstays Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while Herself, though fairest unsupported flower, From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh. Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm; Then voluble and bold; now hid, now seen, Among thick-woven arborets, and flowers Imborder'd on each bank, the hand of Eve: Spot more delicious than those gardens feign'd Or of revived Adonis, or renown'd Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son: Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse. Much he the place admired, the person more: As one who, long in populous city pent, Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air, Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe Among the pleasant villages and farms

Adjoin'd, from each thing met conceives delight; The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine, Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound; If chance, with nymph-like step, fair virgin pass, What pleasing seem'd, for her now pleases more; She most, and in her look sums all delight: Such pleasure took the serpent to behold This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve Thus early, thus alone: her heavenly form Angelic, but more soft, and feminine, Her graceful innocence, her every air Of gesture, or least action, overawed His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought: That space the evil one abstracted stood From his own evil, and for the time remain'd Stupidly good; of enmity disarm'd, Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge. But the hot hell that always in him burns, Though in mid heaven, soon ended his delight, And tortures him now more, the more he sees Of pleasure, not for him ordain'd: then soon Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites:

"Thoughts, whither have ye led me? With what Compulsion, thus transported, to forget What hither brought us? hate, not love; nor hope Of Paradise for hell, hope here to taste Of pleasure; but all pleasure to destroy, Save what is in destroying; other joy To me is lost. Then, let me not let pass Occasion which now smiles; behold alone The woman, opportune to all attempts; Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,

Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould;
Foe not informidable, exempt from wound,
I not; so much hath hell debased, and pain
Enfeebled me, to what I was in heaven.
She fair, divinely fair, fit love for gods!
Not terrible, though terror be in love
And beauty, not approach'd by stronger hate,
Hate stronger, under show of love well feign'd,
The way which to her ruin now I tend."

So spake the enemy of mankind enclosed In serpent, inmate bad, and toward Eve Address'd his way: not with indented wave, Prone on the ground, as since; but on his rear, Circular base of rising folds, that tower'd Fold above fold, a surging maze; his head Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes; With burnish'd neck of verdant gold, erect Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass Floated redundant: pleasing was his shape, And lovely; never since of serpent kind Lovelier: not those that in Illyria changed Hermione and Cadmus, or the god In Epidaurus; nor to which transform'd Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline was seen; He, with Olympias; this, with her who bore Scipio, the height of Rome. With tract oblique At first, as one who sought access, but fear'd To interrupt, sidelong he works his way. As when a ship, by skilful steersman wrought, Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail: So varied he, and of his tortuous train



Curl'd many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve, To lure her eye: she, busied, heard the sound Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used To such disport before her through the field, From every beast; more duteous at her call, Than at Circean call the herd disguised. He, bolder now, uncall'd before her stood, But as in gaze admiring: oft he bow'd His turret crest, and sleek enamell'd neck,

Fawning; and lick'd the ground whereon she trod. His gentle dumb expression turn'd at length The eye of Eve to mark his play; he, glad Of her attention gain'd, with serpent tongue Organic, or impulse of vocal air, His fraudulent temptation thus began:

"Wonder not, sovereign mistress, if, perhaps, Thou canst, who art sole wonder: much less arm Thy looks, the heaven of mildness, with disdain, Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze Insatiate, I thus single; nor have fear'd Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired. Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair, Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore, With ravishment beheld! there best beheld, Where universally admired; but here, In this enclosure wild, these beasts among, Beholders rude, and shallow to discern Half what in thee is fair, one man except, Who sees thee? (and what is one?) who shouldst be A goddess among gods, adored and served seen By angels numberless, thy daily train."

So glozed the tempter, and his proem tuned: Into the heart of Eve his words made way, Though at the voice much marvelling: at length, Not unamazed, she thus in answer spake:

"What may this mean? language of man, pronounced By tongue of brute, and human sense express'd? The first, at least, of these, I thought denied To beasts; whom God, on their creation-day, Created mute to all articulate sound:
The latter I demur; for in their looks
Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.

Thee, serpent, subtlest beast of all the field I knew, but not with human voice endued; Redouble, then, this miracle, and say, How camest thou speakable of mute, and how To me so friendly grown, above the rest Of brutal kind, that daily are in sight? Say, for such wonder claims attention due."

To whom the guileful tempter thus replied: "Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve! Easy to me it is to tell thee all [obey'd: What thou command'st; and right thou shouldst be I was at first as other beasts that graze The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low, As was my food; nor aught but food discern'd. Or sex, and apprehended nothing high: Till, on a day roving the field, I chanced A goodly tree far distant to behold, Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mix'd, Ruddy and gold: I nearer drew to gaze: When from the boughs a savoury odour blown, Grateful to appetite, more pleased my sense Than smell of sweetest fennel, or the teats Of ewe or goat dropping with milk at even, Unsuck'd of lamb or kid, that tend their play. To satisfy the sharp desire I had Of tasting those fair apples, I resolved Not to defer; hunger and thirst at once, Powerful persuaders, quicken'd at the scent Of that alluring fruit, urged me so keen. About the mossy trunk I wound me soon; For, high from ground, the branches would require Thy utmost reach, or Adam's: round the tree, All other beasts that saw, with like desire Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.

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Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung Tempting, so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill I spared not; for such pleasure, till that hour, At feed or fountain, never had I found. Sated at length, ere long I might perceive Strange alteration in me, to degree Of reason in my inward powers, and speech Wanted not long, though to this shape retain'd. Thenceforth to speculations high or deep I turn'd my thoughts, and with capacious mind Consider'd all things visible in heaven, Or earth, or middle; all things fair and good: But all that fair and good in thy divine Semblance, and in thy beauty's heavenly ray, United I beheld: no fair to thine Equivalent or second! which compell'd Me thus, though importune, perhaps, to come And gaze, and worship thee, of right declared Sovereign of creatures, universal dame!"

So talk'd the spirited sly snake; and Eve, Yet more amazed, unwary thus replied:

"Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt
The virtue of that fruit, in thee first proved:
But say, where grows the tree? from hence how far?
For many are the trees of God that grow
In Paradise, and various yet unknown
To us; in such abundance lies our choice,
As leaves a greater store of fruit untouch'd,
Still hanging incorruptible, till men
Grow up to their provision, and more hands
Help to disburden Nature of her birth."

To whom the wily adder, blithe and glad: "Empress, the way is ready, and not long; Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat,

Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past Of blowing myrrh and balm: if thou accept My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon."

"Lead, then," said Eve. He, leading, swiftly roll'd In tangles, and made intricate seem straight, To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy Brightens his crest. As when a wandering fire, Compact of unctuous vapour, which the night Condenses, and the cold environs round, Kindled through agitation to a flame, Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends, Hovering and blazing with delusive light, Misleads the amazed night-wanderer from his way To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool, There swallow'd up and lost, from succour far; So glister'd the dire snake, and into fraud Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the tree Of prohibition, root of all our woe; Which, when she saw, thus to our guide she spake:

"Serpent, we might have spared our coming hither, Fruitless to me, though fruit be here to excess, The credit of whose virtue rest with thee; Wondrous, indeed, if cause of such effects! But of this tree we may not taste nor touch; God so commanded, and left that command Sole daughter of his voice: the rest, we live Law to ourselves; our reason is our law."

To whom the tempter guilefully replied:
"Indeed! hath God then said that of the fruit
Of all these garden-trees ye shall not eat,
Yet lords declared of all in earth or air?"

To whom thus Eve, yet sinless: "Of the fruit Of each tree in the garden we may eat: But of the fruit of this fair tree amidst The garden, God hath said, 'Ye shall not eat Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die.'"

She scarce had said, though brief, when now more bold The tempter, but, with show of zeal and love To man, and indignation at his wrong,
New part puts on; and, as to passion moved,
Fluctuates disturb'd, yet comely, and in act
Raised, as of some great matter to begin.
As when, of old, some orator renown'd,
In Athens, or free Rome, where eloquence
Flourish'd, since mute, to some great cause address'd,
Stood in himself collected; while each part,
Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue,
Sometimes in height began, as no delay
Of preface brooking, through his zeal of right:
So standing, moving, or to height upgrown,
The tempter, all impassion'd, thus began:

"O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving plant, Mother of science! now I feel thy power Within me clear; not only to discern Things in their causes, but to trace the ways Of highest agents, deem'd, however, wise. Queen of this universe! do not believe Those rigid threats of death: ye shall not die; How should ye? by the fruit? it gives you life To knowledge: by the Threatener? look on me, Me, who have touch'd and tasted; yet both live, And life more perfect have attain'd than fate Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot. Shall that be shut to man, which to the beast Is open? or will God incense his ire For such a petty trespass, and not praise Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain Of death denounced, whatever thing death be,

Deterr'd not from achieving what might lead To happier life, knowledge of good and evil; Of good, how just? of evil, if what is evil Be real, why not known, since easier shunn'd? God, therefore, cannot hurt ye, and be just; Not just, not God; not fear'd then, nor obey'd: Your fear itself of death removes the fear. Why, then, was this forbid? Why, but to awe; Why, but to keep ye low and ignorant, His worshippers. He knows that, in the day Ye eat thereof, your eyes, that seem so clear, Yet are but dim, shall presently be then Open'd and clear'd, and ye shall be as gods, Knowing both good and evil, as they know. That ye shall be as gods, since I as man, Internal man, is but proportion meet; I, of brute, human; ye, of human, gods. So ye shall die, perhaps, by putting off Human, to put on gods; death to be wish'd, Though threaten'd, which no worse than this can bring. And what are gods, that man may not become As they, participating godlike food? The gods are first, and that advantage use On our belief, that all from them proceeds. I question it; for this fair earth I see, Warm'd by the sun, producing every kind; Them, nothing: if they all things, who enclosed Knowledge of good and evil in this tree, That whose eats thereof, forthwith attains Wisdom without their leave? and wherein lies The offence, that man should thus attain to know? What can your knowledge hurt him, or this tree Impart against his will, if all be his? Or is it envy? and can envy dwell

In heavenly breasts? These, these, and many more Causes import your need of this fair fruit. Goddess humane, reach, then, and freely taste."

He ended; and his words, replete with guile,
Into her heart too easy entrance won:
Fix'd on the fruit she gazed, which to behold
Might tempt alone; and in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd
With reason, to her seeming, and with truth:
Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked
An eager appetite, raised by the smell
So savoury of that fruit, which, with desire,
Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,
Solicited her longing eye; yet first,
Pausing awhile, thus to herself she mused:

"Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits, Though kept from man, and worthy to be admired; Whose taste, too long forborne, at first assay Gave elocution to the mute, and taught The tongue, not made for speech, to speak thy praise. Thy praise he also, who forbids thy use, Conceals not from us, naming thee the tree Of knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil; Forbids us, then, to taste: but his forbidding Commends thee more, while it infers the good By thee communicated, and our want: For good unknown sure is not had; or, had, And yet unknown, is as not had at all. In plain, then, what forbids he but to know, Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise? Such prohibitions bind not. But, if death Bind us with after-bands, what profits, then, Our inward freedom? In the day we eat Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die!

How dies the serpent? he hath eaten, and lives, And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns, Irrational till then. For us alone Was death invented? or to us denied This intellectual food, for beasts reserved? For beasts it seems: yet that one beast which first Hath tasted envies not, but brings with joy The good befallen him, author unsuspect, Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile. What fear I, then? rather, what know to fear Under this ignorance of good or evil, Of God or death, of law or penalty? Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine, Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste, Of virtue to make wise: what hinders, then, To reach, and feed at once both body and mind?"

So saying, her rash hand, in evil hour,
Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck'd, she ate!
Earth felt the wound, and Nature, from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,
That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk
The guilty serpent; and well might; for Eve,
Intent now only on her taste, nought else
Regarded; such delight till then, as seem'd,
In fruit she never tasted, whether true
Or fancied so, through expectation high
Of knowledge; nor was godhead from her thought.
Greedily she engorged without restraint,
And knew not eating death: satiate at length,
And heighten'd as with wine, jocund and boon,
Thus to herself she pleasingly began:

"O sovereign, virtuous, precious of all trees In Paradise! of operation blest To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed, And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end Created; but henceforth my early care, Not without song, each morning, and due praise, Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease Of thy full branches, offer'd free to all; Till, dieted by thee, I grow mature In knowledge, as the gods, who all things know; Though others envy what they cannot give:



For, had the gift been theirs, it had not here Thus grown. Experience, next, to thee I owe, Best guide: not following thee, I had remain'd In ignorance; thou open'st Wisdom's way, And givest access, though secret she retire. And I, perhaps, am secret: heaven is high; High, and remote to see from thence distinct Each thing on earth; and other care, perhaps, May have diverted from continual watch Our great Forbidder, safe with all his spies About him. But to Adam in what sort Shall I appear? Shall I to him make known As yet my change, and give him to partake Full happiness with me; or rather not, But keep the odds of knowledge in my power, Without copartner? so to add what wants In female sex, the more to draw his love, And render me more equal; and, perhaps, A thing not undesirable, sometime Superior; for, inferior, who is free? This may be well: but what if God have seen, And death ensue? then I shall be no more! And Adam, wedded to another Eve, Shall live with her, enjoying; I extinct: A death to think! Confirm'd, then, I resolve, Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe: So dear I love him, that with him all deaths I could endure-without him live no life."

So saying, from the tree her step she turn'd, But first low reverence done, as to the power That dwelt within, whose presence had infused Into the plant sciential sap, derived From nectar, drink of gods. Adam, the while, Waiting, desirous her return, had wove

Of choicest flowers a garland, to adorn Her tresses, and her rural labours crown, As reapers oft are wont their harvest queen. Great joy he promised to his thoughts, and new Solace in her return, so long delay'd: Yet oft his heart, divine of something ill, Misgave him; he the faltering measure felt; And forth to meet her went, the way she took That morn when first they parted; by the tree Of knowledge he must pass; there he her met, Scarce from the tree returning: in her hand A bough of fairest fruit, that downy smiled, New gather'd, and ambrosial smell diffused. To him she hasted; in her face excuse Came prologue, and apology too prompt; Which, with bland words at will, she thus address'd:

"Hast thou not wonder'd, Adam, at my stay? Thee I have miss'd, and thought it long, deprived Thy presence; agony of love till now Not felt, nor shall be twice; for never more Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought, The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear: This tree is not, as we are told, a tree Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown Opening the way, but of divine effect To open eyes, and make them gods who taste; And hath been tasted such: the serpent, wise, Or not restrain'd as we, or not obeying, Hath eaten of the fruit; and is become, Not dead, as we are threaten'd, but thenceforth Endued with human voice and human sense, Reasoning to admiration: and with me Persuasively hath so prevail'd, that I

Have also tasted, and have also found
The effects to correspond: opener mine eyes,
Dim erst, dilated spirits, ampler heart,
And growing up to godhead; which for thee
Chiefly I sought; without thee can despise.
For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss;
Tedious, unshared with thee, and odious soon.
Thou, therefore, also taste, that equal lot
May join us—equal joy, as equal love:
Lest, thou not tasting, different degree
Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce
Deity for thee, when fate will not permit."

Thus Eve, with countenance blithe, her story told; But in her cheek distemper flushing glow'd. On the other side, Adam, soon as he heard The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed, Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill Ran through his veins, and all his joints relax'd; From his slack hand the garland, wreathed for Eve, Down dropt, and all the faded roses shed; Speechless he stood and pale; till thus, at length, First to himself, he inward silence broke:

"O fairest of creation, last and best
Of all God's works! creature, in whom excell'd
Whatever can to sight or thought be form'd,
Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!
How art thou lost! how on a sudden lost,
Defaced, deflower'd, and now to death devote!
Rather, how hast thou yielded to transgress
The strict forbiddance? how to violate
The sacred fruit forbidden? Some cursed fraud
Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown,
And me with thee hath ruin'd; for with thee
Certain my resolution is to die:

How can I live without thee? how forego
Thy sweet converse, and love so dearly join'd,
To live again in these wild woods forlorn?
Should God create another Eve, and I
Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
Would never from my heart: no, no! I feel
The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe."

So having said, as one from sad dismay Recomforted, and, after thoughts disturb'd, Submitting to what seemed remediless, Thus, in calm mood, his words to Eve he turn'd:

"Bold deed thou hast presumed, adventurous Eve, And peril great provoked, who thus hast dared. Had it been only coveting to eve That sacred food, sacred to abstinence. Much more to taste it, under ban to touch. But past, who can recall; or done, undo? Not God omnipotent, nor fate; yet so Perhaps thou shalt not die; perhaps the fact Is not so heinous now, foretasted fruit, Profaned first by the serpent, by him first Made common, and unhallow'd, ere our taste: Nor yet on him found deadly; he yet lives; Lives, as thou saidst, and gains to live, as man, Higher degree of life: inducement strong To us, as likely, tasting, to attain Proportional ascent; which cannot be But to be gods, or angels, demi-gods. Nor can I think that God, Creator wise, Though threatening, will in earnest so destroy Us, his prime creatures, dignified so high, Set over all his works; which, in our fall,

For us created, needs with us must fail, Dependant made; so God shall uncreate, Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour lose: Not well conceived of God, who, though his power Creation could repeat, yet would be loth Us to abolish, lest the adversary Triumph and say: 'Fickle their state, whom God Most favours; who can please him long? He ruin'd, now mankind; whom will he next?' Matter of scorn, not to be given the foe. However, I with thee have fix'd my lot, Certain to undergo like doom: if death, Consort with thee, death is to me as life; So forcible within my heart I feel The bond of nature draw me to my own; My own in thee, for what thou art is mine; Our state cannot be sever'd; we are one, One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself." So Adam; and thus Eve to him replied:

So Adam; and thus Eve to him replied:

"O glorious trial of exceeding love,
Illustrious evidence, example high!
Engaging me to emulate; but, short
Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,
Adam? from whose dear side I boast me sprung,
And gladly of our union hear thee speak,
One heart, one soul in both; whereof good proof
This day affords, declaring thee resolved,
Rather than death, or aught than death more dread,
Shall separate us, link'd in love so dear,
To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,
If any be, of tasting this fair fruit;
Whose virtue (for of good still good proceeds,
Direct, or by occasion) hath presented
This happy trial of thy love, which else

So eminently never had been known.

Were it I thought death menaced would ensue
This my attempt, I would sustain alone
The worst, and not persuade thee; rather die,
Deserted, than oblige thee with a fact
Pernicious to thy peace, chiefly assured
Remarkably so late of thy so true,
So faithful love, unequall'd: but I feel
Far otherwise the event; not death, but life
Augmented, open'd eyes, new hopes, new joys,
Taste so divine, that what of sweet before
Hath touch'd my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh.
On my experience, Adam, freely taste,
And fear of death deliver to the winds."

So saying, she embraced him, and for joy Tenderly wept; much won, that he his love Had so ennobled, as of choice to incur Divine displeasure for her sake, or death. In recompense (for such compliance bad Such recompense best merits), from the bough She gave him of that fair enticing fruit With liberal hand: he scrupled not to eat, Against his better knowledge: not deceived, But fondly overcome with female charm. Earth trembled from her entrails, as again In pangs; and Nature gave a second groan; Sky lour'd, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops Wept at completing of the mortal sin Original: while Adam took no thought, Eating his fill; nor Eve to iterate Her former trespass fear'd, the more to soothe Him with her loved society; that now, As with new wine intoxicated both, They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel

Divinity within them breeding wings,
Wherewith to scorn the earth; but that false fruit
Far other operation first display'd,
Carnal desire inflaming: he on Eve
Began to cast lascivious eyes; she him
As wantonly repaid; in lust they burn:
Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance move:

"Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste, And elegant, of sapience no small part; Since to each meaning savour we apply, And palate call judicious; I the praise Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purvey'd. Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstain'd From this delightful fruit, nor known till now True relish, tasting. If such pleasure be In things to us forbidden, it might be wish'd, For this one tree had been forbidden ten: But come, so well refresh'd, now let us play, As meet is, after such delicious fare; For never did thy beauty, since the day I saw thee first, and wedded thee, adorn'd With all perfections, so inflame my sense With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now Than ever; bounty of this virtuous tree!"

So said he, and forbore not glance or toy
Of amorous intent, well understood
Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.
Her hand he seized; and to a shady bank,
Thick overhead with verdant roof embower'd,
He led her, nothing loth; flowers were the couch,
Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,
And hyacinth; earth's freshest, softest lap.
There they their fill of love and love's disport
Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,

The solace of their sin; till dewy sleep Oppress'd them, wearied with their amorous play.

Soon as the force of that fallacious fruit, That, with exhilarating vapour bland, About their spirits had play'd, and inmost powers Made err, was now exhaled; and grosser sleep, Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams Encumber'd, now had left them: up they rose As from unrest; and, each the other viewing, Soon found their eyes how open'd, and their minds How darken'd; innocence, that, as a veil, Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gone; Just confidence, and native righteousness, And honour, from about them, naked left To guilty shame: he cover'd, but his robe Uncover'd more. So rose the Danite strong, Herculean Samson, from the harlot-lap Of Philistean Dalilah, and waked Shorn of his strength; they, destitute and bare Of all their virtue, silent, and in face Confounded; long they sat, as stricken mute: Till Adam, though not less than Eve abash'd, At length gave utterance to these words constrain'd:

"O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear
To that false worm, of whomsoever taught
To counterfeit man's voice; true in our fall,
False in our promised rising; since our eyes
Open'd we find, indeed, and find we know
Both good and evil; good lost and evil got;
Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know;
Which leaves us naked thus, of honour void,
Of innocence, of faith, of purity,
Our wonted ornaments now soil'd and stain'd,
And in our faces evident the signs

Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store; Even shame, the last of evils; of the first Be sure then. How shall I behold the face Henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy And rapture so oft beheld? Those heavenly shapes Will dazzle now this earthly, with their blaze Insufferably bright. O! might I here In solitude live savage, in some glade Obscured, where highest woods, impenetrable To star or sun light, spread their umbrage broad And brown as evening! Cover me, ye pines! Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs Hide me, where I may never see them more! But let us now, as in bad plight, devise What best may, for the present, serve to hide The parts of each from other, that seems most To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen; Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves, together sew'd, And girded on our loins, may cover round Those middle parts; that this new comer, Shame, There sit not, and reproach us as unclean."

So counsell'd he, and both together went Into the thickest wood; there soon they chose The fig-tree, not that kind for fruit renown'd, But such as, at this day, to Indians known, In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms, Branching so broad and long, that in the ground The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow About the mother tree, a pillar'd shade, High overarch'd, and echoing walks between: There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat, Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds At loop-holes cut through thickest shade: those leaves They gather'd, broad as Amazonian targe; 2 0

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And, with what skill they had, together sew'd, To gird their waist: vain covering, if to hide Their guilt and dreaded shame! O, how unlike To that first naked glory! Such, of late, Columbus found the American, so girt With feather'd cincture; naked else, and wild Among the trees on isles and woody shores. Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part Cover'd, but not at rest or ease of mind. They sat them down to weep: nor only tears Rain'd at their eyes, but high winds worse within Began to rise; high passions, anger, hate, Mistrust, suspicion, discord; and shook sore Their inward state of mind, calm region once, And full of peace, now tost and turbulent: For understanding ruled not, and the will Heard not her lore; both in subjection now To sensual appetite, who, from beneath, Usurping over sovereign reason, claim'd Superior sway: from thus distemper'd breast, Adam, estranged in look and alter'd style, Speech intermitted thus to Eve renew'd:

"Would thou hadst hearken'd to my words, and stay'd With me, as I besought thee, when that strange Desire of wandering, this unhappy morn, I know not whence possess'd thee; we had then Remain'd still happy; not as now, despoil'd Of all our good; shamed, naked, miserable! Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve The faith they owe: when earnestly they seek Such proof, conclude they then begin to fail."

To whom, soon moved with touch of blame, thus Eve: "What words have pass'd thy lips, Adam, severe? Imputest thou that to my default, or will



Of wandering, as thou call'st it, which who knows
But might as ill have happen'd, thou being by,
Or to thyself, perhaps? Hadst thou been there,
Or here the attempt, thou couldst not have discern'd
Fraud in the serpent, speaking as he spake;
No ground of enmity between us known,
Why he should mean me ill, or seek to harm.
Was I to have never parted from thy side?
As good have grown there still, a lifeless rib.
Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,

Command me absolutely not to go, Going into such danger, as thou saidst? Too facile, then, thou didst not much gainsay: Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss. Hadst thou been firm and fix'd in thy dissent, Neither had I transgress'd, nor thou with me."

To whom, then first incensed, Adam replied: "Is this the love, is this the recompense Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve, express'd Immutable when thou wert lost, not I; Who might have lived, and 'joyed immortal bliss, Yet willingly chose rather death with thee? And am I now upbraided as the cause Of thy transgressing? Not enough severe, It seems, in my restraint: what could I more? I warn'd thee, I admonish'd thee, foretold The danger, and the lurking enemy That lay in wait; beyond this had been force; And force upon free-will hath here no place. But confidence then bore thee on, secure Either to meet no danger, or to find Matter of glorious trial; and, perhaps, I also err'd in overmuch admiring What seem'd in thee so perfect, that I thought No evil durst attempt thee; but I rue That error now, which is become my crime, And thou the accuser. Thus it shall befal Him who, to worth in woman overtrusting, Lets her will rule: restraint she will not brook; And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue, She first his weak indulgence will accuse."

Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning;
And of their vain contest appear'd no end.

PARADISE LOST.

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THE ARGUMENT.

Man's transgression known, the guardian angels forsake Paradise, and return up to heaven to approve their vigilance, and are approved; God declaring that the entrance of Satan could not be by them prevented. He sends his Son to judge the transgressors; who descends, and gives sentence accordingly; then, in pity, clothes them both, and reascends. Sin and Death sitting till then at the gates of hell, by wondrous sympathy feeling the success of Satan in this new world, and the sin by man there committed, resolve to sit no longer confined in hell, but to follow Satan, their sire, up to the place of man: to make the way easier from hell to this world to and fro, they pave a broad highway or bridge over Chaos, according to the track that Satan first made; then, preparing for earth, they meet him; proud of his success, returning to hell; their mutual gratulation. Satan arrives at Pandemonium; in full assembly relates, with boasting, his success against man; instead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed, with himself also, suddenly into serpents, according to his doom given in Paradise; then, deluded with a show of the forbidden tree springing up before them, they, greedily reaching to take of the fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes. The proceedings of Sin and Death; God foretels the final victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things; but, for the present, commands his angels to make several alterations in the heavens and elements. Adam, more and more perceiving his fallen condition, heavily bewails, rejects the condolement of Eve; she persists, and at length appeases him: then, to evade the curse likely to fall on their offspring, proposes to Adam violent ways, which he approves not; but, conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late promise made them, that her seed should be revenged on the serpent; and exhorts her, with him, to seek peace of the offended Deity, by repentance and supplication.



EANWHILE the heinous and despiteful act
Of Satan done in Paradise; and how
He, in the serpent, had perverted Eve,
Her husband she, to taste the fatal fruit,
Was known in heaven; for what can 'scape the eve
Of God all-seeing, or deceive his heart

Omniscient? who, in all things wise and just, Hinder'd not Satan to attempt the mind Of man, with strength entire, and free-will arm'd: Complete to have discover'd and repulsed Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend. For still they knew, and ought to have still remember'd, The high injunction, not to taste that fruit, Whoever tempted; which they, not obeying, Incurr'd (what could they less?) the penalty; And, manifold in sin, deserved to fall. Up into heaven from Paradise, in haste, The angelic guards ascended, mute and sad, For man; for of his state by this they knew, Much wondering how the subtle fiend had stolen Entrance unseen. Soon as the unwelcome news From earth arrived at heaven-gate, displeased All were who heard; dim sadness did not spare That time celestial visages, yet, mix'd With pity, violated not their bliss. About the new-arrived, in multitudes, The ethereal people ran, to hear and know How all befel: they, towards the throne supreme, Accountable, made haste, to make appear, With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance, And easily approved; when the Most High, Eternal Father, from his secret cloud Amidst, in thunder utter'd thus his voice:

"Assembled angels, and ye powers return'd From unsuccessful charge, be not dismay'd, Nor troubled at these tidings from the earth, Which your sincerest care could not prevent; Foretold so lately what would come to pass, When first this tempter cross'd the gulf from hel.. I told ye then he should prevail, and speed

On his bad errand; man should be seduced, And flatter'd out of all, believing lies Against his Maker; no decree of mine Concurring to necessitate his fall, Or touch with lightest moment of impulse His free-will, to her own inclining left In even scale. But fall'n he is; and now What rests, but that the mortal sentence pass On his transgression, death denounced that day? Which he presumes already vain and void, Because not yet inflicted, as he fear'd, By some immediate stroke; but soon shall find Forbearance no acquittance, ere day end. Justice shall not return, as bounty, scorn'd. But whom send I to judge them? whom but thee, Vicegerent Son? To thee I have transferr'd All judgment, whether in heaven, or earth, or hell. Easy it may be seen that I intend Mercy colleague with justice, sending thee, Man's Friend, his Mediator, his design'd Both Ransom and Redeemer voluntary, And, destined Man himself, to judge man fall'n."

So spake the Father; and, unfolding bright Toward the right hand his glory, on the Son Blazed forth unclouded deity; he full Resplendent all his Father manifest Express'd, and thus divinely answer'd mild:

"Father Eternal, thine is to decree;
Mine, both in heaven and earth, to do thy will
Supreme; that thou in me, thy Son beloved,
May'st ever rest well pleased. I go to judge
On earth these thy transgressors; but thou know'st,
Whoever judged, the worst on me must light,
When time shall be; for so I undertook

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Before thee; and, not repenting, this obtain
Of right, that I may mitigate their doom
On me derived; yet I shall temper so
Justice with mercy, as may illustrate most
Them fully satisfied, and thee appease.
Attendance none shall need, nor train, where none
Are to behold the judgment, but the judged,
Those two: the third, best absent, is condemn'd,
Convict by flight, and rebel to all law:
Conviction to the serpent none belongs."

Thus saying, from his radiant seat he rose Of high collateral glory. Him, thrones and powers, Princedoms, and dominations ministrant, Accompanied to heaven-gate; from whence Eden, and all the coast, in prospect lay. Down he descended straight; the speed of gods Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes wing'd. Now was the sun in western cadence low From noon, and gentle airs, due at their hour, To fan the earth, now waked, and usher in The evening cool; when he, from wrath more cool, Came, the mild Judge and Intercessor both, To sentence man: the voice of God they heard Now walking in the garden, by soft winds Brought to their ears, while day declined; they heard, And from his presence hid themselves among The thickest trees, both man and wife; till God, Approaching, thus to Adam call'd aloud:

"Where art thou, Adam, wont with joy to meet My coming, seen far off? I miss thee here; Not pleased, thus entertain'd with solitude, Where obvious duty erewhile appear'd unsought: Or come I less conspicuous, or what change Absents thee, or what chance detains? Come forth!" He came, and with him, Eve, more loth, though first To offend; discountenanced both, and discomposed; Love was not in their looks, either to God, Or to each other; but apparent guilt, And shame, and perturbation, and despair; Anger, and obstinacy, and hate, and guile. Whence Adam, faltering long, thus answer'd brief:

"I heard thee in the garden, and of thy voice Afraid, being naked, hid myself." To whom The gracious Judge, without revile, replied:

"My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not fear'd, But still rejoiced; how is it now become
So dreadful to thee? That thou art naked, who
Hath told thee? Hast thou eaten of the tree,
Whereof I gave thee charge thou shouldst not eat?"

To whom thus Adam, sore beset, replied: "O heaven! in evil strait this day I stand Before my Judge; either to undergo Myself the total crime, or to accuse My other self, the partner of my life; Whose failing, while her faith to me remains, I should conceal, and not expose to blame By my complaint; but strict necessity Subdues me, and calamitous constraint; Lest on my head both sin and punishment, However insupportable, be all Devolved; though, should I hold my peace, yet thou Wouldst easily detect what I conceal. This woman, whom thou madest to be my help, And gavest me as thy perfect gift, so good, So fit, so acceptable, so divine, That from her hand I could suspect no ill, And what she did, whatever in itself, Her doing seem'd to justify the deed;

She gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

To whom the sovereign Presence thus replied:

"Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey Before his voice? or was she made thy guide, Superior, or but equal, that to her Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place Wherein God set thee above her, made of thee, And for thee, whose perfection far excell'd Hers in all real dignity? Adorn'd She was, indeed, and lovely, to attract Thy love, not thy subjection; and her gifts Were such as under government well seem'd; Unseemly to bear rule; which was thy part And person, hadst thou known thyself aright."

So having said, he thus to Eve in few:

"Say, woman, what is this which thou hast done?" To whom sad Eve, with shame nigh overwhelm'd, Confessing soon, yet not before her Judge Bold or loquacious, thus abash'd replied:

"The serpent me beguiled, and I did eat."

Which when the Lord God heard, without delay To judgment he proceeded on the accused Serpent, though brute, unable to transfer The guilt on him who made him instrument Of mischief, and polluted from the end Of his creation: justly then accursed, As vitiated in nature: more to know Concern'd not man (since he no further knew), Nor alter'd his offence; yet God at last To Satan, first in sin, his doom applied, Though in mysterious terms, judged as then best: And on the serpent thus his curse let fall:

"Because thou hast done this, thou art accursed Above all cattle, each beast of the field;

Upon thy belly grovelling thou shalt go,
And dust shalt eat all the days of thy life.
Between thee and the woman I will put
Enmity, and between thine and her seed;
Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel."

So spake this oracle, then verified,
When Jesus, son of Mary, second Eve,
Saw Satan fall, like lightning, down from heaven,
Prince of the air; then, rising from his grave,
Spoil'd principalities and powers, triumph'd
In open show; and, with ascension bright,
Captivity led captive through the air,
The realm itself of Satan, long usurp'd;
Whom he shall tread at last under our feet;
Even he, who now foretold his fatal bruise:
And to the woman thus his sentence turn'd:

"Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply By thy conception; children thou shalt bring In sorrow forth; and to thy husband's will Thine shall submit; he over thee shall rule."

On Adam last thus judgment he pronounced:
"Because thou hast hearken'd to the voice of thy wife,
And eaten of the tree concerning which
I charged thee, saying, 'Thou shalt not eat thereof,'
Cursed is the ground for thy sake; thou in sorrow
Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy life;
Thorns, also, and thistles, it shall bring thee forth
Unbid; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;
In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,
Till thou return unto the ground; for thou
Out of the ground wast taken: know thy birth,
For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return."

So judged he man, both Judge and Saviour sent; And the instant stroke of death, denounced that day, Removed far off; then pitying how they stood Before him, naked to the air, that now Must suffer change, disdain'd not to begin Thenceforth the form of servant to assume: As when he wash'd his servants' feet; so now, As father of his family, he clad Their nakedness with skins of beasts, or slain. Or, as the snake, with youthful coat repaid; And thought not much to clothe his enemies: Nor he their outward only with the skins Of beasts, but inward nakedness, much more Opprobrious, with his robe of righteousness Arraying, cover'd from his Father's sight. To him, with swift ascent, he up return'd, Into his blissful bosom reassumed, In glory, as of old; to him, appeased, All, though all-knowing, what had pass'd with man Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.

Meanwhile, ere thus was sinn'd and judged on earth, Within the gates of hell sat Sin and Death, In counterview within the gates, that now Stood open wide, belching outrageous flame Far into Chaos, since the fiend pass'd through, Sin opening; who thus now to Death began:

"O son, why sit we here, each other viewing Idly, while Satan, our great author, thrives In other worlds, and happier seat provides For us, his offspring dear? It cannot be But that success attends him; if mishap, Ere this he had return'd, with fury driven By his avengers; since no place like this Can fit his punishment, or their revenge. Methinks I feel new strength within me rise, Wings growing, and dominion given me large,

Beyond this deep; whatever draws me on, Or sympathy, or some connatural force, Powerful at greatest distance to unite, With secret amity, things of like kind, By secretest conveyance. Thou, my shade Inseparable, must with me along: For Death from Sin no power can separate. But, lest the difficulty of passing back Stay his return, perhaps, over this gulf Impassable, impervious, let us try Adventurous work, yet to thy power and mine Not unagreeable, to found a path Over this main from hell to that new world, Where Satan now prevails; a monument Of merit high to all the infernal host, Easing their passage hence, for intercourse, Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead, Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn By this new-felt attraction and instinct."

Whom thus the meagre shadow answer'd soon:
"Go, whither fate, and inclination strong,
Lead thee: I shall not lag behind, nor err
The way, thou leading; such a scent I draw
Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste
The savour of death from all things there that live;
Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest
Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid."

So saying, with delight he snuff'd the smell Of mortal change on earth. As when a flock Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote, Against the day of battle, to a field, Where armies lie encamp'd, come flying, lured With scent of living carcasses design'd For death, the following day, in bloody fight:

So scented the grim feature, and upturn'd His nostril wide into the murky air; Sagacious of his quarry from so far. Then both, from out hell-gates, into the waste Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark, Flew diverse; and with power (their power was great), Hovering upon the waters, what they met Solid or slimy, as in raging sea Toss'd up and down, together crowded drove, From each side shoaling towards the mouth of hell: As when two polar winds, blowing adverse Upon the Cronian sea, together drive Mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way Beyond Petsora eastward, to the rich Cathaian coast. The aggregated soil, Death, with his mace petrific, cold and dry, As with a trident smote, and fix'd as firm As Delos, floating once; the rest his look Bound with Gorgonian rigour not to move; And with asphaltic slime, broad as the gate, Deep to the roots of hell the gather'd beach They fasten'd, and the mole immense wrought on, Over the foaming deep, high-arch'd, a bridge Of length prodigious, joining to the wall Immovable of this now fenceless world, Forfeit to Death; from hence a passage broad, Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to hell. So, if great things to small may be compared, Xerxes, the liberty of Greece to yoke, From Susa, his Memnonian palace high, Came to the sea; and, over Hellespont Bridging his way, Europe with Asia join'd, And scourged with many a stroke the indignant waves. Now had they brought the work by wondrous art

Pontifical, a ridge of pendent rock,
Over the vex'd abyss, following the track
Of Satan to the self-same place, where he
First lighted from his wing, and landed safe
From out of Chaos, to the outside bare
Of this round world: with pins of adamant
And chains they made all fast, too fast they made
And durable! And now in little space
The confines met of empyrean heaven



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And of this world; and, on the left hand, hell With long reach interposed; three several ways In sight, to each of these three places led. And now their way to earth they had descried, To Paradise first tending; when, behold! Satan, in likeness of an angel bright, Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering His zenith, while the sun in Aries rose: Disguised he came; but those his children dear Their parent soon discern'd, though in disguise. He, after Eve seduced, unminded slunk Into the wood fast by; and, changing shape, To observe the sequel, saw his guileful act, By Eve, though all unweeting, seconded Upon her husband; saw their shame that sought Vain covertures; but when he saw descend The Son of God to judge them, terrified He fled; not hoping to escape, but shun The present; fearing, guilty, what his wrath Might suddenly inflict; that past, return'd By night, and, listening where the hapless pair Sat in their sad discourse, and various plaint, Thence gather'd his own doom; which understood Not instant, but of future time, with joy And tidings fraught, to hell he now return'd; And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot Of this new wondrous pontifice, unhoped Met, who to meet him came, his offspring dear. Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight Of that stupendous bridge his joy increased. Long he admiring stood, till Sin, his fair Enchanting daughter, thus the silence broke:

"O parent, these are thy magnific deeds, Thy trophies! which thou view'st as not thine own; Thou art their author, and prime architect: For I no sooner in my heart divined (My heart, which by a secret harmony Still moves with thine, join'd in connexion sweet) That thou on earth hadst prosper'd, which thy looks Now also evidence, but straight I felt, Though distant from thee worlds between, yet felt That I must after thee, with this thy son; Such fatal consequence unites us three. Hell could no longer hold us in her bounds, Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure Detain from following thy illustrious track: Thou hast achieved our liberty, confined Within hell-gates till now; thou us empower'd To fortify thus far, and overlay, With this portentous bridge, the dark abyss. Thine now is all this world; thy virtue hath won What thy hands builded not; thy wisdom gain'd, With odds, what war hath lost, and fully avenged Our foil in heaven: here thou shalt monarch reign, There didst not; there let him still victor sway, As battle hath adjudged, from this new world Retiring, by his own doom alienated; And henceforth monarchy with thee divide Of all things, parted by the empyreal bounds, His quadrature, from thy orbicular world; Or try thee now more dangerous to his throne."

Whom thus the prince of darkness answer'd glad: "Fair daughter, and thou son and grandchild both; High proof ye now have given to be the race Of Satan (for I glory in the name, Antagonist of heaven's Almighty King), Amply have merited of me—of all The infernal empire, that so near heaven's door

Triumphal with triumphal act have met, Mine, with this glorious work; and made one realm, Hell and this world, one realm, one continent Of easy thoroughfare. Therefore—while I Descend through darkness, on your road, with ease, To my associate powers, them to acquaint With these successes, and with them rejoice-You two this way, among these numerous orbs, All yours, right down to Paradise descend; There dwell, and reign in bliss: thence on the earth' Dominion exercise, and in the air, Chiefly on man, sole lord of all declared; Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill. My substitutes I send ye, and create Plenipotent on earth, of matchless might Issuing from me: on your joint vigour now, My hold of this new kingdom all depends, Through Sin to Death exposed by my exploit. If your joint power prevail, the affairs of hell No detriment need fear; go, and be strong."

So saying, he dismiss'd them; they with speed Their course through thickest constellations held, Spreading their bane; the blasted stars look'd wan; And planets, planet-struck, real eclipse Then suffer'd. The other way Satan went down The causey to hell-gate: on either side Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaim'd, And with rebounding surge the bars assail'd, That scorn'd his indignation: through the gate, Wide open and unguarded, Satan pass'd, And all about found desolate; for those, Appointed to sit there, had left their charge, Flown to the upper world; the rest were all Far to the inland retired, about the walls

Of Pandemonium, city and proud seat Of Lucifer, so by allusion call'd Of that bright star to Satan paragon'd: There kept their watch the legions, while the grand In council sat, solicitous what chance Might intercept their emperor sent: so he. Departing, gave command, and they observed. As when the Tartar, from his Russian foe, By Astracan, over the snowy plains, Retires; or Bactrian Sophi, from the horns Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond The realm of Aladule, in his retreat To Tauris or Casbeen; so these, the late Heaven-banish'd host, left desert utmost hell Many a dark league, reduced in careful watch Round their metropolis, and now expecting Each hour their great adventurer, from the search Of foreign worlds. He through the midst, unmark'd, In show plebeian angel militant Of lowest order, pass'd; and from the door Of that Plutonian hall, invisible Ascended his high throne, which, under state Of richest texture spread, at the upper end Was placed in regal lustre. Down awhile He sat, and round about him saw, unseen: At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head And shape star-bright appear'd, or brighter, clad With what permissive glory since his fall Was left him, or false glitter: all amazed At that so sudden blaze, the Stygian throng Bent their aspect, and whom they wish'd beheld, Their mighty chief return'd: loud was the acclaim: Forth rush'd in haste the great consulting peers, Raised from their dark divan, and with like joy

Congratulant approach'd him, who with hand, Silence, and with these words, attention won:

"Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers; For in possession such, not only of right, I call ye, and declare ye now; return'd Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth Triumphant out of this infernal pit Abominable, accursed, the house of woe, And dungeon of our tyrant: now possess, As lords, a spacious world, to our native heaven Little inferior, by my adventure hard, With peril great, achieved. Long were to tell What I have done, what suffer'd; with what pain Voyaged the unreal, vast, unbounded deep Of horrible confusion: over which. By Sin and Death, a broad way now is paved, To expedite your glorious march; but I Toil'd out my uncouth passage, forced to ride The untractable abyss, plunged in the womb Of unoriginal Night and Chaos wild, That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely opposed My journey strange, with clamorous uproar Protesting fate supreme; thence, how I found The new-created world, which fame in heaven Long had foretold; a fabric wonderful, Of absolute perfection! therein man, Placed in a Paradise, by our exile Made happy: him by fraud I have seduced From his Creator; and, the more to increase Your wonder, with an apple: he, thereat Offended, worth your laughter! hath given up Both his beloved man and all this world, To Sin and Death a prey, and so to us, Without our hazard, labour, or alarm,

To range in, and to dwell, and over man
To rule as over all he should have ruled.
True is, me also he hath judged, or rather
Me not, but the brute serpent, in whose shape
Man I deceived!—that which to me belongs
Is enmity, which he will put between
Me and mankind; I am to bruise his heel;
His seed, when is not set, shall bruise my head:
A world who would not purchase with a bruise,
Or much more grievous pain? Ye have the account
Of my performance; what remains, ye gods,
But up, and enter now into full bliss?"

So having said, awhile he stood, expecting Their universal shout, and high applause, To fill his ear; when, contrary he hears, On all sides, from innumerable tongues, A dismal universal hiss, the sound Of public scorn. He wonder'd, but not long Had leisure, wondering at himself now more; His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare; His arms clung to his ribs; his legs entwining Each other, till, supplanted, down he fell A monstrous serpent, on his belly prone, Reluctant, but in vain; a greater Power Now ruled him, punish'd in the shape he sinn'd, According to his doom. He would have spoke, But hiss for hiss return'd with forked tongue To forked tongue: for now were all transform'd Alike, to serpents all, as accessories To his bold riot: dreadful was the din Of hissing through the hall, thick-swarming now With complicated monsters, head and tail, Scorpion, and asp, and amphisbæna dire, Cerastes horn'd, hydrus, and elops drear,

And dipsas (not so thick swarm'd once the soil Bedropt with blood of Gorgon, or the isle Ophiusa); but still greatest he the midst, Now dragon grown, larger than whom the sun Engender'd in the Pythian vale on slime, Huge Python, and his power no less he seem'd Above the rest still to retain. They all Him follow'd, issuing forth to the open field, Where all yet left of that revolted rout, Heaven-fall'n, in station stood, or just array; Sublime with expectation when to see In triumph issuing forth their glorious chief. They saw, but other sight instead-a crowd Of ugly serpents! Horror on them fell, And horrid sympathy; for, what they saw, They felt themselves now changing; down their arms, Down fell both spear and shield; down they as fast, And the dire hiss renew'd, and the dire form Catch'd, by contagion; like in punishment, As in their crime. Thus was the applause they meant, Turn'd to exploding hiss, triumph to shame, Cast on themselves from their own mouths. There stood A grove hard by, sprung up with this their change, His will who reigns above, to aggravate Their penance, laden with fair fruit, like that Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve Used by the tempter; on that prospect strange Their earnest eyes they fix'd, imagining For one forbidden tree a multitude Now risen, to work them further woe or shame; Yet, parch'd with scalding thirst and hunger fierce, Though to delude them sent, could not abstain; But on they roll'd in heaps, and up the trees Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks

That curl'd Megæra. Greedily they pluck'd The fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew Near that bituminous lake where Sodom flamed; This more delusive, not the touch, but taste Deceived; they, fondly thinking to allay Their appetite with gust, instead of fruit Chew'd bitter ashes, which the offended taste With spattering noise rejected: oft they assay'd, Hunger and thirst constraining; drugg'd as oft, With hatefulest disrelish writhed their jaws, With soot and cinders fill'd; so oft they fell Into the same illusion, not as man Splagued, Whom they triumph'd once lapsed. Thus were they And worn with famine, long and ceaseless hiss, Till their lost shape, permitted, they resumed, Yearly enjoin'd, some say, to undergo This annual humbling, certain number'd days, To dash their pride, and joy for man seduced. However, some tradition they dispersed Among the heathen, of their purchase got, And fabled how the serpent, whom they call'd Ophion, with Eurynome, the wide-Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driven And Ops, ere vet Dictaen Jove was born.

Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair Too soon arrived; Sin, there in power before, Once actual; now in body, and to dwell Habitual habitant; behind her, Death, Close following pace for pace, not mounted yet On his pale horse; to whom Sin thus began:

"Second of Satan sprung, all-conquering Death! What think'st thou of our empire now, though earn'd With travail difficult? not better far Than still at hell's dark threshold to have sat watch, Unnamed, undreaded, and thyself half-starved?"

Whom thus the sin-born monster answer'd soon:
"To me, who with eternal famine pine,
Alike is hell, or paradise, or heaven;
There best, where most with ravine I may meet:
Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems
To stuff this maw, this vast un-hide-bound corpse."

To whom the incestuous mother thus replied:
"Thou, therefore, on these herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
Feed first; on each beast next, and fish, and fowl;
No homely morsels: and whatever thing
The scythe of Time mows down, devour unspared;
Till I, in man residing, through the race
His thoughts, his looks, words, actions, all infect,
And season him thy last and sweetest prey."

This said, they both betook them several ways, Both to destroy, or unimmortal make All kinds, and for destruction to mature Sooner or later; which the Almighty seeing, From his transcendent seat the saints among, To those bright orders utter'd thus his voice:

"See, with what heat these dogs of hell advance To waste and havoc yonder world, which I So fair and good created, and had still Kept in that state, had not the folly of man Let in these wasteful furies, who impute Folly to me; so doth the prince of hell And his adherents, that with so much ease I suffer them to enter and possess A place so heavenly; and, conniving, seem To gratify my scornful enemies, That laugh, as if, transported with some fit Of passion, I to them had quitted all,

At random yielded up to their misrule;
And know not that I call'd, and drew them thither,
My hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth
Which man's polluting sin with taint hath shed
On what was pure; till, cramm'd and gorged, nigh burst
With suck'd and glutted offal, at one sling
Of thy victorious arm, well-pleasing Son,
Both Sin and Death, and yawning grave, at last,
Through chaos hurl'd, obstruct the mouth of hell
For ever, and seal up his ravenous jaws.
Then heaven and earth, renew'd, shall be made pure
To sanctity, that shall receive no stain:
Till then, the curse pronounced on both precedes."

He ended, and the heavenly audience loud Sung hallelujah, as the sound of seas, Through multitude that sung: "Just are thy ways, Righteous are thy decrees on all thy works; Who can extenuate thee? Next, to the Son, Destined Restorer of mankind, by whom New heaven and earth shall to the ages rise, Or down from heaven descend." Such was their song. While the Creator, calling forth by name His mighty angels, gave them several charge, As sorted best with present things. The sun Had first his precept so to move, so shine, As might affect the earth with cold and heat Scarce tolerable, and from the north to call Decrepit winter; from the south to bring Solstitial summer's heat. To the blank moon Her office they prescribed; to the other five Their planetary motions, and aspects, In sextile, square, and trine, and opposite, Of noxious efficacy, and when to join In synod unbenign; and taught the fix'd

Their influence malignant when to shower, Which of them rising with the sun, or falling, Should prove tempestuous; to the winds they set Their corners, when with bluster to confound Sea, air, and shore; the thunder when to roll With terror through the dark aerial hall. Some say, he bid his angels turn askance The poles of earth, twice ten degrees and more, From the sun's axle; they with labour push'd Oblique the centric globe. Some say, the sun Was bid turn reins from the equinoctial road Like distant breadth to Taurus with the seven Atlantic Sisters, and the Spartan Twins, Up to the tropic Crab; thence down amain By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales, As deep as Capricorn, to bring in change Of seasons to each clime; else had the spring Perpetual smiled on earth with vernant flowers, Equal in days and nights, except to those Beyond the polar circles; to them day Had unbenighted shone, while the low sun, To recompense his distance, in their sight Had rounded still the horizon, and not known Or east or west, which had forbid the snow From cold Estotiland, and south as far Beneath Magellan. At that tasted fruit, The sun, as from Thyestean banquet, turn'd His course intended; else, how had the world Inhabited, though sinless, more than now, Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat? These changes in the heavens, though slow, produced Like change on sea and land; sidereal blast, Vapour, and mist, and exhalation hot, Corrupt and pestilent: now, from the north

Of Norumbega, and the Samoed shore, Bursting their brazen dungeon, arm'd with ice, And snow, and hail, and stormy gust and flaw, Boreas and Cæcias, and Argestes loud, And Thrascias, rend the woods, and seas upturn; With adverse blasts upturns them from the south Notus, and Afer, black with thunderous clouds,



From Sierra Liona; thwart of these, as fierce, Forth rush'd the Levant and the Ponent winds, Eurus and Zephyr, with their lateral noise, Sirocco and Libecchio. Thus began Outrage from lifeless things; but Discord first, Daughter of Sin, among the irrational Death introduced, through fierce antipathy. Beast now with beast 'gan war, and fowl with fowl, And fish with fish: to graze the herb all leaving, Devour'd each other: nor stood much in awe Of man, but fled him, or, with countenance grim. Glared on him passing. These were, from without, The growing miseries which Adam saw Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade, To sorrow abandon'd, but worse felt within; And in a troubled sea of passion tost, Thus to disburden sought with sad complaint:

"O miserable of happy! Is this the end Of this new glorious world, and me so late The glory of that glory? who now, become Accursed of blessed, hide me from the face Of God, whom to behold was then my height Of happiness! Yet well, if here would end The misery; I deserved it, and would bear My own deservings; but this will not serve: All that I eat or drink, or shall beget, Is propagated curse. O voice, once heard Delightfully, 'Increase and multiply;' Now death to hear! for what can I increase, Or multiply, but curses on my head? Who of all ages to succeed, but, feeling The evil on him brought by me, will curse My head? 'Ill fare our ancestor impure! For this we may thank Adam!' but his thanks Shall be the execration; so, besides Mine own that bide upon me, all from me Shall with a fierce reflux on me redound; On me, as on their natural centre, light Heavy, though in their place. O fleeting joys Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes! Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay To mould me man? Did I solicit thee From darkness to promote me, or here place In this delicious garden? As my will Concurr'd not to my being, it were but right And equal to reduce me to my dust; Desirous to resign, and render back, All I received; unable to perform Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold The good I sought not. To the loss of that, Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable Thy justice seems; yet, to say truth, too late I thus contest; then should have been refused Those terms, whatever, when they were proposed. Thou didst accept them: wilt thou enjoy the good, Then cavil the conditions? and, though God Made thee without thy leave, what if thy son Prove disobedient; and, reproved, retort, 'Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not:' Wouldst thou admit for his contempt of thee That proud excuse? yet him, not thy election, But natural necessity, begot. God made thee of choice his own, and of his own To serve him; thy reward was of his grace; Thy punishment, then, justly is at his will. Be it so, for I submit; his doom is fair, That dust I am, and shall to dust return:

O welcome hour whenever! Why delays His hand to execute what his decree Fix'd on this day? Why do I overlive? Why am I mock'd with death, and lengthen'd out To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet Mortality, my sentence, and be earth Insensible! How glad would lay me down, As in my mother's lap! There I should rest, And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more Would thunder in my ears; no fear of worse To me, and to my offspring, would torment me With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt Pursues me still, lest all I cannot die; Lest that pure breath of life—the spirit of man Which God inspired, cannot together perish With this corporeal clod; then, in the grave, Or in some other dismal place, who knows But I shall die a living death? O thought Horrid, if true! Yet why? It was but breath Of life that sinn'd: what dies but what had life And sin? The body properly hath neither. All of me, then, shall die. let this appease The doubt, since human reach no further knows; For though the Lord of all be infinite, Is his wrath also? Be it, man is not so, But mortal doom'd. How can be exercise Wrath without end on man, whom death must end? Can he make deathless death? That were to make Strange contradiction, which to God himself Impossible is held; as argument Of weakness, not of power. Will he draw out, For anger's sake, finite to infinite In punish'd man, to satisfy his rigour, Satisfied never? That were to extend

His sentence beyond dust and nature's law, By which all causes else, according still To the reception of their matter, act; Not to the extent of their own sphere. But sav That death be not one stroke, as I supposed, Bereaving sense, but endless misery From this day onward—which I feel begun Both in me, and without me-and so last To perpetuity: ah, me! that fear Comes thundering back with dreadful revolution On my defenceless head; both death and I Are found eternal, and incorporate both: Nor I on my part single; in me all Posterity stands cursed; fair patrimony That I must leave ye, sons! O were I able To waste it all myself, and leave ye none! So disinherited, how would ye bless Me, now your curse! Ah, why should all mankind, For one man's fault, thus guiltless be condemn'd, If guiltless? But from me what can proceed, But all corrupt; both mind and will depraved Not to do only, but to will the same With me? How can they, then, acquitted stand In sight of God? Him, after all disputes, Forced I absolve: all my evasions vain, And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still But to my own conviction: first and last On me-me only, as the source and spring Of all corruption, all the blame lights due; So might the wrath! Fond wish! couldst thou support That burden, heavier than the earth to bear-Than all the world much heavier, though divided With that bad woman? Thus, what thou desirest, And what thou fear'st, alike destroys all hope

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Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable
Beyond all past example and future;
To Satan only like, both crime and doom.
O conscience! into what abyss of fears
And horrors hast thou driven me; out of which
I find no way, from deep to deeper plunged!"

Thus Adam to himself lamented loud. Through the still night; not now, as ere man fell. Wholesome, and cool, and mild, but with black air Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom. Which to his evil conscience represented All things with double terror; on the ground Outstretch'd he lay, on the cold ground, and oft Cursed his creation; death as oft accused Of tardy execution, since denounced The day of his offence. "Why comes not death." Said he, "with one thrice-acceptable stroke To end me? Shall truth fail to keep her word. Justice divine not hasten to be just? But death comes not at call; justice divine Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries. O woods, O fountains, hillocks, dales, and bowers! With other echo late I taught your shades To answer, and resound far other song." Whom thus afflicted, when sad Eve beheld, Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh, Soft words to his fierce passion she assay'd; But her, with stern regard, he thus repell'd:

"Out of my sight, thou serpent! That name best Befits thee, with him leagued, thyself as false And hateful: nothing wants, but that thy shape, Like his, and colour serpentine, may show Thy inward fraud, to warn all creatures from thee Henceforth, lest that too heavenly form, pretended

To hellish falsehood, snare them! But for thee I had persisted happy, had not thy pride And wandering vanity, when least was safe, Rejected my forewarning, and disdain'd Not to be trusted; longing to be seen, Though by the devil himself; him overweening To over-reach; but, with the serpent meeting, Fool'd and beguiled; by him thou, I by thee, To trust thee from my side, imagined wise, Constant, mature, proof against all assaults; And understood not all was but a show, Rather than solid virtue; all but a rib Crooked by nature, bent, as now appears, More to the part sinister, from me drawn; Well if thrown out, as supernumerary To my just number found. O! why did God, Creator wise, that peopled highest heaven With spirits masculine, create at last This novelty on earth, this fair defect Of nature, and not fill the world at once With men, as angels, without feminine; Or find some other way to generate Mankind? This mischief had not then befallen, And more that shall befal; innumerable Disturbances on earth through female snares, And straight conjunction with this sex: for either He never shall find out fit mate, but such As some misfortune brings him, or mistake; Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain, Through her perverseness, but shall see her gain'd By a far worse; or, if she love, withheld By parents; or his happiest choice too late Shall meet, already link'd and wedlock-bound To a fell adversary, his hate or shame:



Which infinite calamity shall cause To human life, and household peace confound."

He added not, and from her turn'd: but Eve,
Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing,
And tresses all disorder'd, at his feet
Fell humble; and, embracing them, besought
His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint:

"Forsake me not thus, Adam! witness, Heaven, What love sincere, and reverence in my heart,

I bear thee, and unweeting have offended, Unhappily deceived! Thy suppliant, I beg, and clasp thy knees; bereave me not, Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid, Thy counsel, in this uttermost distress My only strength and stay; forlorn of thee, Whither shall I betake me, where subsist? While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps, Between us two let there be peace; both joining, As join'd in injuries, one enmity Against a foe by doom express assign'd us, That cruel serpent. On me exercise not Thy hatred for this misery befallen; On me, already lost, me than thyself More miserable. Both have sinn'd; but thou Against God only, I against God and thee; And to the place of judgment will return, There with my cries importune Heaven, that all The sentence, from thy head removed, may light On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe; Me-me only, just object of his ire!"

She ended, weeping; and her lowly plight, Immovable till peace obtain'd from fault Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought Commiseration: soon his heart relented Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight, Now at his feet submissive in distress; Creature so fair his reconcilement seeking, His counsel, whom she had displeased, his aid: As one disarm'd, his anger all he lost, And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon:

"Unwary, and too desirous, as before, So now, of what thou know'st not, who desirest The punishment all on thyself; alas Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain His full wrath, whose thou feel'st as yet least part, And my displeasure bear'st so ill. If prayers Could alter high decrees, I to that place Would speed before thee, and be louder heard, That on my head all might be visited; Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven. To me committed, and by me exposed. But rise; let us no more contend, nor blame Each other, blamed enough elsewhere; but strive, In offices of love, how we may lighten Each other's burden, in our share of woe; Since this day's death denounced, if aught I see, Will prove no sudden, but a slow-paced evil-A long day's dying, to augment our pain, And to our seed (O hapless seed!) derived."

To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied: "Adam, by sad experiment I know How little weight my words with thee can find, Found so erroneous, thence by just event Found so unfortunate: nevertheless, Restored by thee, vile as I am, to place Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart, Living or dying, from thee I will not hide What thoughts in my unquiet breast are risen, Tending to some relief of our extremes, Or end; though sharp and sad, yet tolerable, As in our evils, and of easier choice. If care of our descent perplex us most, Which must be born to certain woe, devour'd By death at last (and miserable it is To be to others cause of misery, Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring

Into this cursed world a woeful race, That, after wretched life, must be at last Food for so foul a monster); in thy power It lies yet, ere conception, to prevent The race unblest, to being yet unbegot. Childless thou art, childless remain: so death Shall be deceived his glut, and with us two Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw. But if thou judge it hard and difficult, Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain From love's due rites, nuptial embraces sweet, And, with desire, to languish without hope, Before the present object languishing With like desire; which would be misery And torment less than none of what we dread; Then, both ourselves and seed at once to free From what we fear for both, let us make short, Let us seek death; or, he not found, supply With our own hands his office on ourselves. Why stand we longer shivering under fears That show no end but death; and have the power, Of many ways to die, the shortest choosing, Destruction with destruction to destroy?"

She ended here, or vehement despair
Broke off the rest; so much of death her thoughts
Had entertain'd, as dyed her cheeks with pale.
But Adam, with such counsel nothing sway'd,
To better hopes his more attentive mind
Labouring had raised; and thus to Eve replied:

"Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems To argue in thee something more sublime And excellent than what thy mind contemns; But self-destruction therefore sought, refutes That excellence thought in thee, and implies,

Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret For loss of life and pleasure overloved. Or if thou covet death, as utmost end Of misery, so thinking to evade The penalty pronounced, doubt not but God Hath wiselier arm'd his vengeful ire, than so To be forestall'd; much more I fear lest death, So snatch'd, will not exempt us from the pain We are by doom to pay; rather, such acts Of contumacy will provoke the Highest To make death in us live: then let us seek Some safer resolution, which methinks I have in view, calling to mind with heed Part of our sentence, that thy seed shall bruise The serpent's head: piteous amends! unless Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand foe, Satan, who, in the serpent, hath contrived Against us this deceit: to crush his head Would be revenge, indeed! which will be lost By death brought on ourselves, or childless days Resolved, as thou proposest; so our foe Shall 'scape his punishment ordain'd, and we, Instead, shall double ours upon our heads. No more be mention'd, then, of violence Against ourselves, and wilful barrenness That cuts us off from hope, and savours only Rancour and pride, impatience and despite, Reluctance against God, and his just yoke Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild And gracious temper he both heard and judged, Without wrath or reviling: we expected Immediate dissolution, which we thought Was meant by death that day; when, lo! to thee Pains only in child-bearing were foretold,

And bringing forth, soon recompensed with joy, Fruit of thy womb. On me the curse aslope Glanced on the ground; with labour I must earn My bread; what harm? Idleness had been worse; My labour will sustain me; and, lest cold Or heat should injure us, his timely care Hath, unbesought, provided; and his hands Clothed us, unworthy, pitying while he judged; How much more, if we pray him, will his ear Be open, and his heart to pity incline, And teach us further by what means to shun The inclement seasons, rain, ice, hail, and snow! Which now the sky, with various face, begins To show us in this mountain: while the winds Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks Of these fair spreading trees; which bids us seek Some better shroud, some better warmth, to cherish Our limbs benumb'd, ere this diurnal star Leave cold the night, how we his gather'd beams Reflected may with matter sere foment; Or, by collision of two bodies, grind The air attrite to fire; as late the clouds Justling, or push'd with winds, rude in their shock, Tine the slant lightning, whose thwart flame, driven Kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine, Idown. And sends a comfortable heat from far. Which might supply the sun: such fire to use, And what may else be remedy or cure To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought, He will instruct us praying, and of grace Beseeching him; so as we need not fear To pass commodiously this life, sustain'd By him with many comforts, till we end In dust, our final rest and native home.

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What better can we do, than, to the place Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall Before him, reverent, and there confess Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek? Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn From his displeasure; in whose look serene, When angry most he seem'd, and most severe, What else but favour, grace, and mercy, shone?"

So spake our father, penitent; nor Eve Felt less remorse: they, forthwith to the place Repairing where he judged them, prostrate fell Before him, reverent, and both confess'd Humbly their faults, and pardon begg'd, with tears Watering the ground; and with their sighs the air Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek.

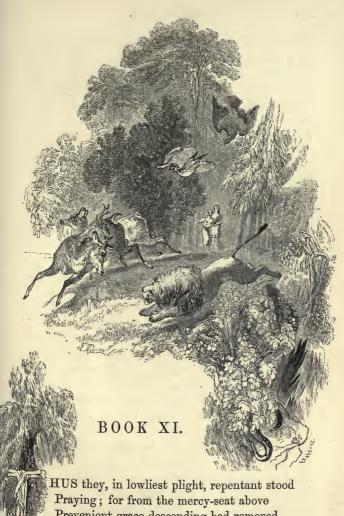


PARADISE LOST.

BOOK XI.

THE ARGUMENT.

The Son of God presents to his Father the prayers of our first parents now repenting, and intercedes for them: God accepts them, but declares that they must no longer abide in Paradise; sends Michael with a band of cherubim to dispossess them; but first to reveal to Adam future things: Michael's coming down. Adam shows to Eve certain ominous signs: he discerns Michael's approach; goes out to meet him: the angel denounces their departure. Eve's lamentation. Adam pleads, but submits: the angel leads him up to a high hill; sets before him in vision what shall happen till the flood.



HUS they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood
Praying; for from the mercy-seat above
Prevenient grace descending had removed
The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh
Regenerate grow instead, that sighs now breathed
Unutterable, which the Spirit of prayer

Inspired, and wing'd for heaven with speedier flight Than loudest oratory: yet their port

Not of mean suitors; nor important less
Seem'd their petition, than when the ancient pair,
In fables old, less ancient yet than these,
Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha, to restore
The race of mankind drown'd, before the shrine
Of Themis stood devout. To heaven their prayers
Flew up, nor miss'd the way, by envious winds
Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they pass'd
Dimensionless through heavenly doors; then clad
With incense, where the golden altar fumed,
By their great Intercessor, came in sight
Before the Father's throne: them the glad Son
Presenting, thus to intercede began:

"See, Father, what first-fruits on earth are sprung From thy implanted grace in man; these sighs And prayers, which, in this golden censer, mix'd With incense, I, thy priest, before thee bring; Fruits of more pleasing savour, from thy seed Sown with contrition in his heart, than those Which, his own hand manuring, all the trees Of Paradise could have produced, ere fallen From innocence. Now, therefore, bend thine ear To supplication; hear his sighs, though mute; Unskilful with what words to pray, let me Interpret for him-me, his Advocate And Propitiation; all his works on me, Good, or not good, ingraft; my merit those Shall perfect, and for these my death shall pay. Accept me; and, in me, from these receive The smell of peace toward mankind; let him live Before thee reconciled, at least his days Number'd, though sad, till death, his doom (which I

To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse), To better life shall yield him, where with me All my redeem'd may dwell in joy and bliss; Made one with me, as I with thee am one."

To whom the Father, without cloud, serene: "All thy request for man, accepted Son, Obtain; all thy request was my decree: But, longer in that Paradise to dwell, The law I gave to nature him forbids: Those pure immortal elements that know No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul, Eject him, tainted now, and purge him off, As a distemper gross, to air as gross, And mortal food, as may dispose him best For dissolution wrought by sin, that first Distemper'd all things, and of incorrupt Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts Created him endow'd; with happiness, And immortality: that fondly lost, This other served but to eternize woe; Till I provided death: so death becomes His final remedy; and, after life, Tried in sharp tribulation, and refined By faith and faithful works, to second life, Waked in the renovation of the just, Resigns him up with heaven and earth renew'd. But let us call to synod all the blest Thide Through heaven's wide bounds: from them I will not My judgments; how with mankind I proceed, As how with peccant angels late they saw, And in their state, though firm, stood more confirm'd."

He ended, and the Son gave signal high
To the bright minister that watch'd; he blew
His trumpet, heard in Oreb since, perhaps,

When God descended, and, perhaps, once more To sound at general doom. The angelic blast Fill'd all the regions: from their blissful bowers Of amarantine shade, fountain, or spring, By the waters of life, where'er they sat In fellowships of joy, the sons of light Hasted, resorting to the summons high, And took their seats: till, from his throne supreme, The Almighty thus pronounced his sovereign will:

"O sons, like one of us man is become, To know both good and evil, since his taste Of that defended fruit: but let him boast His knowledge of good lost, and evil got; Happier, had it sufficed him to have known Good by itself, and evil not at all. He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite, My motions in him; longer than they move, His heart I know how variable and vain. Self-left. Lest, therefore, his now bolder hand Reach also of the tree of life, and eat, And live for ever (dream at least to live For ever) to remove him I decree, And send him from the garden forth to till The ground whence he was taken, fitter soil. Michael, this my behest have thou in charge; Take to thee from among the cherubim Thy choice of flaming warriors, lest the fiend, Or in behalf of man, or to invade Vacant possession, some new trouble raise; Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God, Without remorse, drive out the sinful pair-From hallow'd ground the unholy; and denounce To them, and to their progeny, from thence Perpetual banishment. Yet, lest they faint

At the sad sentence rigorously urged (For I behold them soften'd, and with tears Bewailing their excess), all terror hide. If patiently thy bidding they obey, Dismiss them, not disconsolate; reveal To Adam what shall come in future days, As I shall thee enlighten; intermix My covenant in the woman's seed renew'd: So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace: And, on the east side of the garden, place, Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs, Cherubic watch, and of a sword the flame Wide-waving, all approach far off to fright, And guard all passage to the tree of life; Lest Paradise a receptacle prove To spirits foul, and all my trees their prey, With whose stolen fruit man once more to delude."

He ceased; and the archangelic power prepared For swift descent; with him the cohort bright Of watchful cherubim: four faces each Had, like a double Janus; all their shape Spangled with eyes more numerous than those Of Argus, and more wakeful than to drowse, Charm'd with Arcadian pipe, the pastoral reed Of Hermes, or his opiate rod. Meanwhile, To resalute the world with sacred light, Leucothea waked, and with fresh dews embalm'd The earth; when Adam and first matron Eve Had ended now their orisons, and found Strength added from above; new hope to spring Out of despair; joy, but with fear yet link'd; Which thus to Eve his welcome words renew'd:

"Eve, easily may faith admit that all
The good which we enjoy from heaven descends;
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But that from us aught should ascend to heaven So prevalent, as to concern the mind Of God, high-blest, or to incline his will. Hard to belief may seem; yet this will prayer, Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne Even to the seat of God. For since I sought By prayer the offended Deity to appease, Kneel'd, and before him humbled all my heart, Methought I saw him placable and mild. Bending his ear; persuasion in me grew That I was heard with favour; peace return'd Home to my breast, and to my memory His promise, that thy seed shall bruise our foe: Which, then not minded in dismay, yet now Assures me that the bitterness of death Is past, and we shall live. Whence, hail to thee, Eve, rightly call'd mother of all mankind, Mother of all things living, since by thee Man is to live, and all things live for man."

To whom thus Eve, with sad demeanour, meek: "Ill-worthy I such title should belong
To me, transgressor, who, for thee ordain'd
A help, became thy snare: to me reproach
Rather belongs, distrust, and all dispraise:
But infinite in pardon was my Judge,
That I, who first brought death on all, am graced
The source of life; next favourable thou,
Who highly thus to entitle me vouchsafest,
Far other name deserving. But the field
To labour calls us, now with sweat imposed,
Though after sleepless night; for see! the morn,
All unconcern'd with our unrest, begins
Her rosy progress, smiling: let us forth;
I never from thy side henceforth to stray,

Where'er our day's work lies, though now enjoin'd Laborious till day droop: while here we dwell, What can be toilsome in these pleasant walks? Here let us live, though in fallen state, content."

So spake, so wish'd, much-humbled Eve; but fate Subscribed not. Nature first gave signs, impress'd On bird, beast, air; air suddenly eclipsed, After short blush of morn; nigh, in her sight, The bird of Jove, stoop'd from his aery tour, Two birds of gayest plume before him drove; Down from a hill, the beast that reigns in woods, First hunter then, pursued a gentle brace, Goodliest of all the forest, hart and hind; Direct to the eastern gate was bent their flight. Adam observed, and, with his eye the chase Pursuing, not unmoved, to Eve thus spake:

"O Eve, some further change awaits us nigh,
Which Heaven, by these mute signs in nature, shows,
Forerunners of his purpose; or to warn
Us, haply too secure of our discharge
From penalty, because from death released
Some days: how long, and what till then our life,
Who knows? or more than this, that we are dust,
And thither must return, and be no more?
Why else this double object in our sight,
Of flight pursued in the air, and o'er the ground,
One way the self-same hour? Why, in the east,
Darkness ere day's mid-course, and morning-light
More orient in yon western cloud, that draws
O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
And slow descends with something heavenly fraught?"

He err'd not; for, by this, the heavenly bands Down from a sky of jasper lighted now In Paradise, and on a hill made halt; A glorious apparition, had not doubt
And carnal fear that day dimm'd Adam's eye.
Not that more glorious, when the angels met
Jacob in Mahanaim, where he saw
The field pavilion'd with his guardians bright;
Nor that which on the flaming mount appear'd
In Dothan, cover'd with a camp of fire,
Against the Syrian king, who, to surprise
One man, assassin-like, had levied war,
War unproclaim'd. The princely hierarch
In their bright stand there left his powers, to seize
Possession of the garden; he alone,
To find where Adam shelter'd, took his way,
Not unperceived of Adam; who to Eve,
While the great visitant approach'd, thus spake:

"Eve, now expect great tidings, which, perhaps, Of us will soon determine, or impose
New laws to be observed; for I descry,
From yonder blazing cloud that veils the hill,
One of the heavenly host, and by his gait,
None of the meanest; some great potentate,
Or of the thrones above, such majesty
Invests his coming; yet not terrible,
That I should fear, nor sociably mild,
As Raphael, that I should much confide,
But solemn and sublime; whom, not to offend,
With reverence I must meet, and thou retire."

He ended; and the archangel soon drew nigh, Not in his shape celestial, but as man Clad to meet man; over his lucid arms A military vest of purple flow'd, Livelier than Melibæan, or the grain Of Sarra, worn by kings and heroes old In time of truce: Iris had dipt the woof; His starry helm unbuckled show'd him prime In manhood where youth ended; by his side, As in a glistering zodiac, hung the sword, Satan's dire dread, and in his hand the spear. Adam bow'd low; he, kingly, from his state Inclined not, but his coming thus declared:

"Adam, Heaven's high behest no preface needs: Sufficient that thy prayers are heard; and death, Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress, Defeated of his seizure many days, Given thee of grace, wherein thou may'st repent, And one bad act with many deeds well done May'st cover: well may, then, thy Lord, appeased, Redeem thee quite from death's rapacious claim: But longer in this Paradise to dwell Permits not; to remove thee I am come, And send thee from the garden forth, to till The ground whence thou wast taken, fitter soil."

He added not; for Adam, at the news
Heart-struck, with chilling gripe of sorrow stood,
That all his senses bound; Eve, who unseen,
Yet all had heard, with audible lament
Discover'd soon the place of her retire:

"O unexpected stroke, worse than of death! Must I thus leave thee, Paradise? thus leave Thee, native soil? these happy walks and shades, Fit haunt of gods? where I had hope to spend, Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day That must be mortal to us both? O flowers, That never will in other climate grow, My early visitation, and my last At even, which I bred up with tender hand From the first opening bud, and gave ye names, Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank

Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount? Thee, lastly, nuptial bower, by me adorn'd With what to sight or smell was sweet, from thee How shall I part, and whither wander down Into a lower world; to this obscure And wild? How shall we breathe in other air Less pure, accustom'd to immortal fruits?"

Whom thus the angel interrupted mild:
"Lament not, Eve, but patiently resign
What justly thou hast lost, nor set thy heart,
Thus over fond, on that which is not thine:
Thy going is not lonely; with thee goes
Thy husband; him to follow thou art bound;
Where he abides, think there thy native soil."

Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp Recovering, and his scatter'd spirits return'd, To Michael thus his humble words address'd:

"Celestial, whether among the thrones, or named Of them the highest; for such of shape may seem Prince above princes; gently hast thou told Thy message, which might else in telling wound, And, in performing, end us; what besides Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair, Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring, Departure from this happy place (our sweet Recess, and only consolation left Familiar to our eyes); all places else Inhospitable appear, and desolate, Nor knowing us, nor known: and if, by prayer Incessant, I could hope to change the will Of him who all things can, I would not cease To weary him with my assiduous cries: But prayer against his absolute decree No more avails than breath against the wind,

Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth: Therefore to his great bidding I submit. This most afflicts me; that, departing hence, As from his face I shall be hid, deprived His blessed countenance: here I could frequent. With worship, place by place where he vouchsafed Presence divine, and to my sons relate, 'On this mount he appear'd; under this tree Stood visible; among these pines his voice I heard; here with him at this fountain talk'd:' So many grateful altars I would rear Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone Of lustre from the brook, in memory Or monument to ages, and thereon Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flowers. In yonder nether world where shall I seek His bright appearances, or footstep trace? For though I fled him angry, yet, recall'd To life prolong'd, and promis'd race, I now Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts Of glory, and far off his steps adore."

To whom thus Michael, with regard benign:

"Adam, thou know'st heaven his, and all the earth;
Not this rock only; his omnipresence fills
Land, sea, and air, and every kind that lives,
Fomented by his virtual power, and warm'd:
All the earth he gave thee to possess and rule,
No despicable gift; surmise not, then,
His presence to these narrow bounds confined
Of Paradise, or Eden; this had been,
Perhaps, thy capital seat, from whence had spread
All generations, and had hither come,
From all the ends of the earth, to celebrate
And reverence thee, their great progenitor.

But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought down To dwell on even ground now with thy sons:
Yet doubt not but in valley and in plain,
God is, as here, and will be found alike
Present; and of his presence many a sign
Still following thee, still compassing thee round
With goodness and paternal love, his face
Express, and of his steps the track divine.



Which that thou may'st believe, and be confirm'd Ere thou from hence depart, know, I am sent To show thee what shall come in future days To thee, and to thy offspring; good with bad Expect to hear, supernal grace contending With sinfulness of men; thereby to learn True patience, and to temper joy with fear And pious sorrow; equally inured By moderation either state to bear, Prosperous or adverse: so shalt thou lead Safest thy life, and best prepared endure Thy mortal passage when it comes. Ascend This hill; let Eve (for I have drench'd her eyes) Here sleep below, while thou to foresight wakest, As once thou slept'st, while she to life was form'd."

To whom thus Adam gratefully replied: "Ascend, I follow thee, safe guide, the path Thou lead'st me, and to the hand of Heaven submit, However chastening; to the evil turn My obvious breast, arming to overcome By suffering, and earn rest from labour won, If so I may attain." So both ascend In the visions of God. It was a hill, Of Paradise the highest, from whose top, The hemisphere of earth, in clearest ken, Stretch'd out to the amplest reach of prospect, lay. Not higher that hill, nor wider looking round, Whereon, for different cause, the tempter set Our second Adam, in the wilderness, To show him all earth's kingdoms, and their glory. His eye might there command wherever stood City of old or modern fame, the seat Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Cham,

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And Samarcand by Oxus, Temir's throne, To Paquin, of Sinæan kings; and thence To Agra, and Lahor, of Great Mogul, Down to the golden Chersonese; or where The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since In Hispahan; or where the Russian Czar In Moscow; or the Sultan in Bizance, Turchestan-born: nor could his eye not ken The empire of Negus to his utmost port Ercoco, and the less maritime kings, Monbaza, and Quiloa, and Melind, And Sofala (thought Ophir), to the realm Of Congo, and Angola farthest south: Or thence from Niger flood to Atlas mount, The kingdoms of Almanzor, Fez and Sus, Morocco, and Algiers, and Tremisen; On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway The world: in spirit, perhaps, he also saw Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume, And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat Of Atabalipa, and yet unspoil'd Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons Call El Dorado. But to nobler sights Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed, Which that false fruit, that promised clearer sight, Had bred; then purged with euphrasy and rue The visual nerve, for he had much to see, And from the well of life three drops instill'd. So deep the power of these ingredients pierced, Even to the inmost seat of mental sight, That Adam, now enforced to close his eyes, Sunk down, and all his spirits became entranced; But him the gentle angel by the hand Soon raised, and his attention thus recall'd;

"Adam, now ope thine eyes, and first behold The effects which thy original crime hath wrought In some to spring from thee, who never touch'd The excepted tree, nor with the snake conspired, Nor sinn'd thy sin; yet from that sin derive Corruption, to bring forth more violent deeds."

His eyes he open'd, and beheld a field, Part arable and tilth, whereon were sheaves New reap'd; the other part, sheep-walks and folds; In the midst an altar, as the landmark, stood, Rustic, of grassy sward: thither, anon, A sweaty reaper from his tillage brought First-fruits, the green ear, and the yellow sheaf, Uncull'd, as came to hand; a shepherd next, More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock, Choicest and best; then, sacrificing, laid The inwards and their fat, with incense strew'd, On the cleft wood, and all due rites perform'd: His offering soon propitious fire from heaven Consumed, with nimble glance and grateful steam; The other's not, for his was not sincere; Whereat he inly raged, and, as they talk'd, Smote him into the midriff with a stone That beat out life: he fell, and, deadly pale, Groaned out his soul, with gushing blood effused. Much at that sight was Adam in his heart Dismay'd, and thus in haste to the angel cried:

"O teacher, some great mischief hath befall'n To that meek man, who well had sacrificed; Is piety thus, and pure devotion, paid?"

To whom Michael thus, he also moved, replied: "These two are brethren, Adam, and to come Out of thy loins: the unjust the just hath slain, For envy that his brother's offering found



From Heaven acceptance; but the bloody fact Will be avenged; and the other's faith, approved, Lose no reward, though here thou see him die, Rolling in dust and gore." To which our sire:

"Alas! both for the deed, and for the cause! But have I now seen death? Is this the way I must return to native dust? O sight Of terror, foul and ugly to behold! Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!"

To whom thus Michael: "Death thou hast seen In his first shape on man; but many shapes Of death, and many are the ways that lead To his grim cave; all dismal, yet to sense More terrible at the entrance than within. Some, as thou saw'st, by violent stroke shall die: By fire, flood, famine; by intemperance more In meats and drinks, which on the earth shall bring Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew Before thee shall appear, that thou may'st know What misery the inabstinence of Eve Shall bring on men." Immediately a place Before his eyes appear'd, sad, noisome, dark; A lazar-house it seem'd, wherein were laid Numbers of all diseased: all maladies Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds, Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs, Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs, Demoniac frenzy, moping melancholy, And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy, Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence, Dropsies and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums. Dire was the tossing, deep the groans: Despair Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch; And over them triumphant Death his dart Shook, but delay'd to strike, though oft invoked With yows, as their chief good, and final hope. Sight so deform what heart of rock could long, Dry-eved, behold? Adam could not, but wept, Though not of woman born; compassion quell'd His best of man, and gave him up to tears A space, till firmer thoughts restrain'd excess; And, scarce recovering words, his plaint renew'd: "O miserable mankind, to what fall Degraded, to what wretched state reserved!

Better end here unborn. Why is life given To be thus wrested from us? rather, why

Obtruded on us thus? who, if we knew
What we receive, would either not accept
Life offer'd, or soon beg to lay it down,
Glad to be so dismiss'd in peace. Can thus
The image of God in man, created once
So goodly and erect, though faulty since,
To such unsightly sufferings be debased
Under inhuman pains? Why should not man,
Retaining still divine similitude
In part, from such deformities be free,
And, for his Maker's image sake, exempt?"

"Their Maker's image," answer'd Michael, "then Forsook them, when themselves they vilified To serve ungovern'd appetite, and took His image whom they served, a brutish vice, Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve.

Therefore so abject is their punishment, Disfiguring not God's likeness, but their own; Or if his likeness, by themselves defaced; While they pervert pure nature's healthful rules To loathsome sickness; worthily, since they God's image did not reverence in themselves."

"I yield it just," said Adam, "and submit: But is there yet no other way, besides These painful passages, how we may come To death, and mix with our connatural dust?"

"There is," said Michael, "if thou well observe The rule of 'Not too much,' by temperance taught, In what thou eat'st and drink'st, seeking from thence Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight; Till many years over thy head return, So may'st thou live, till, like ripe fruit, thou drop Into thy mother's lap, or be with ease Gather'd, not harshly pluck'd, for death mature: This is old age; but, then, thou must outlive
Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will change
To wither'd, weak, and grey; thy senses then,
Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forego,
To what thou hast; and for the air of youth,
Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign
A melancholy damp of cold and dry,
To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume
The balm of life." To whom our ancestor:

"Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong Life much; bent, rather, how I may be quit, Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous charge, Which I must keep till my appointed day Of rendering up, and patiently attend My dissolution." Michael replied:

"Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou livest Live well; how long, or short, permit to Heaven: And now prepare thee for another sight."

He look'd, and saw a spacious plain, whereon Were tents of various hue; by some were herds Of cattle grazing; others, whence the sound Of instruments, that made melodious chime, Was heard, of harp and organ, and who moved Their stops and chords was seen; his volant touch, Instinct through all proportions, low and high Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue. In other part stood one who, at the forge Labouring, two massy clods of iron and brass Had melted (whether found where casual fire Had wasted woods on mountain or in vale. Down to the veins of earth, thence gliding hot To some cave's mouth, or whether wash'd by stream From under ground); the liquid ore he drain'd Into fit moulds prepared, from which he form'd,

First, his own tools; then, what might else be wrought Fusil or graven in metal. After these,
But on the hither side, a different sort,
From the high neighbouring hills, which was their seat,
Down to the plain descended; by their guise
Just men they seem'd, and all their study bent
To worship God aright, and know his works



Not hid; nor those things last, which might preserve Freedom and peace to men: they on the plain Long had not walk'd, when from the tents, behold, A bevy of fair women, richly gay In gems and wanton dress; to the harp they sung Soft amorous ditties, and in dance came on: The men, though grave, eyed them; and let their eyes Rove without rein; till, in the amorous net Fast caught, they liked; and each his liking chose. And now of love they treat, till the evening star, Love's harbinger, appear'd; then, all in heat, They light the nuptial torch, and bid invoke Hymen, then first to marriage rites invoked: With feast and music all the tents resound. Such happy interview, and fair event Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands, flowers, And charming symphonies, attach'd the heart Of Adam, soon inclined to admit delight, The bent of nature; which he thus express'd:

"True opener of mine eyes, prime angel blest, Much better seems this vision, and more hope Of peaceful days portends, than those two past; Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse: Here nature seems fulfill'd in all her ends."

To whom thus Michael: "Judge not what is best By pleasure, though to nature seeming meet; Created, as thou art, to nobler end, Holy and pure, conformity divine.

Those tents thou saw'st so pleasant, were the tents Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his race Who slew his brother; studious they appear Of arts that polish life, inventors rare; Unmindful of their Maker, though his Spirit Taught them: but they his gifts acknowledged none.

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Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget;
For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seem'd
Of goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
Yet empty of all good, wherein consists
Woman's domestic honour and chief praise;
Bred only and completed to the taste
Of lustful appetence, to sing, to dance,
To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye;
To these that sober race of men, whose lives
Religious titled them the sons of God,
Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame,
Ignobly, to the trains and to the smiles
Of these fair atheists; and now swim in joy,
Ere long to swim at large: and laugh, for which
The world ere long a world of tears must weep."

To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft:
"O pity and shame, that they, who to live well
Enter'd so fair, should turn aside to tread
Paths indirect, or in the midway faint!
But still I see the tenor of man's woe
Holds on the same, from woman to begin."

"From man's effeminate slackness it begins," Said the angel, "who should better hold his place By wisdom, and superior gifts received. But now prepare thee for another scene."

He looked, and saw wide territory spread
Before him, towns, and rural works between;
Cities of men with lofty gates and towers,
Concourse in arms, fierce faces threatening war,
Giants of mighty bone and bold emprise:
Part wield their arms, part curb the foaming steed,
Single or in array of battle ranged,
Both horse and foot, nor idly mustering stood;
One way a band select from forage drives

A herd of beeves, fair oxen and fair kine. From a fat meadow-ground; or fleecy flock, Ewes and their bleating lambs over the plain, Their booty; scarce with life the shepherds fly, But call in aid, which makes a bloody fray; With cruel tournament the squadrons join; Where cattle pastured late, now scatter'd lies, With carcasses and arms, the ensanguined field Deserted: others to a city strong Lay siege, encamp'd; by battery, scale, and mine, Assaulting; others from the wall defend With dart and javelin, stones, and sulphurous fire; On each hand slaughter, and gigantic deeds. In other part the sceptred heralds call To council, in the city gates; anon Grey-headed men and grave, with warriors mix'd, Assemble, and harangues are heard; but soon, In factious opposition; till, at last, Of middle age one rising, eminent In wise deport, spake much of right and wrong, Of justice, of religion, truth, and peace, And judgment from above; him old and young Exploded, and had seized with violent hands; Had not a cloud descending snatch'd him thence, Unseen amid the throng: so violence Proceeded, and oppression, and sword law, Through all the plain, and refuge none was found. Adam was all in tears, and to his guide Lamenting, turn'd full sad: "O what are these? Death's ministers, not men! who thus deal death Inhumanly to men, and multiply Ten thousand fold the sin of him who slew His brother: for of whom such massacre Make they, but of their brethren; men of men?

But who was that just man, whom had not Heaven Rescued, had in his righteousness been lost?"

To whom thus Michael: "These are the product Of those ill-mated marriages thou saw'st; Where good with bad were match'd, who of themselves Abhor to join; and, by imprudence mix'd, Produce prodigious births of body or mind. Such were these giants, men of high renown: For in those days might only shall be admired, And valour and heroic virtue call'd. To overcome in battle, and subdue Nations, and bring home spoils, with infinite Manslaughter, shall be held the highest pitch Of human glory; and for glory done Of triumph, to be styled great conquerors, Patrons of mankind, gods, and sons of gods; Destroyers rightlier call'd, and plagues of men. Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth; And what most merits fame, in silence hid. But he, the seventh from thee, whom thou beheld'st The only righteous in a world perverse, And therefore hated, therefore so beset With foes, for daring single to be just, And utter odious truth, that God would come To judge them with his saints; him the Most High, Rapt in a balmy cloud with winged steeds, Did, as thou saw'st, receive, to walk with God High in salvation and the climes of bliss, Exempt from death; to show thee what reward Awaits the good; the rest what punishment; Which now direct thine eyes and soon behold."

He look'd, and saw the face of things quite changed; The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar; All now was turn'd to jollity and game,

To luxury and riot, feast and dance; Marrying or prostituting, as befel, Rape or adultery, where passing fair Allured them; thence from cups to civil broils. At length a reverend sire among them came, And of their doings great dislike declared. And testified against their ways: he oft Frequented their assemblies, whereso met. Triumphs or festivals, and to them preach'd Conversion and repentance, as to souls In prison, under judgments imminent: But all in vain: which, when he saw, he ceased Contending, and removed his tents far off: Then, from the mountain hewing timber tall, Began to build a vessel of huge bulk: Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and height, Smear'd round with pitch; and in the side a door Contrived; and of provisions laid in large For man and beast: when, lo! a wonder strange! Of every beast, and bird, and insect small, Came sevens and pairs, and enter'd in, as taught Their order: last, the sire and his three sons, With their four wives; and God made fast the door. Meanwhile the south wind rose, and, with black wings Wide-hovering, all the clouds together drove From under heaven; the hills to their supply Vapour, and exhalation, dusk and moist, Sent up amain. And now the thicken'd sky Like a dark ceiling stood; down rush'd the rain Impetuous, and continued till the earth No more was seen; the floating vessel swum Uplifted, and secure, with beaked prow, Rode tilting o'er the waves; all dwellings else Flood overwhelm'd, and them, with all their pomp,

Deep under water roll'd; sea cover'd sea,
Sea without shore: and in their palaces,
Where luxury late reign'd, sea monsters whelp'd
And stabled: of mankind, so numerous late,
All left in one small bottom swum embark'd.
How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,
Depopulation! Thee, another flood,
Of tears and sorrow a flood, thee also drown'd,
And sunk thee as thy sons; till, gently rear'd
By the angel, on thy feet thou stood'st at last,
Though comfortless; as when a father mourns
His children, all in view destroy'd at once;
And scarce to the angel utteredst thus thy plaint:

"O visions ill foreseen! better had I Lived ignorant of future: so had borne My part of evil only, each day's lot Enough to bear: those now, that were dispensed The burden of many ages, on me light At once, by my foreknowledge gaining birth Abortive, to torment me, ere their being, With thought that they must be. Let no man seek Henceforth to be foretold what shall befal Him or his children; evil, he may be sure, Which neither his foreknowing can prevent; And he the future evil shall no less In apprehension than in substance feel, Grievous to bear: but that care now is past: Man is not whom to warn; those few escaped, Famine and anguish will, at last, consume, Wandering that watery desert. I had hope, When violence was ceased, and war on earth, All would have then gone well; peace would have crown'd, With length of happy days, the race of man;

But I was far deceived; for now I see Peace to corrupt, no less than war to waste. How comes it thus? Unfold, celestial guide, And whether here the race of man will end."

Towhom thus Michael: "Those, whom last thou saw'st In triumph and luxurious wealth, are they First seen in acts of prowess eminent, And great exploits, but of true virtue void, Who, having spilt much blood, and done much waste, Subduing nations, and achieved thereby Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prev. Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth, Surfeit, and lust; till wantonness and pride Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace. The conquer'd, also, and enslaved by war, Shall, with their freedom lost, all virtue lose, And fear of God; from whom their piety feign'd. In sharp contest of battle, found no aid Against invaders; therefore, cool'd in zeal, Thenceforth shall practise how to live secure, Worldly or dissolute, on what their lords Shall leave them to enjoy; for the earth shall bear More than enough, that temperance may be tried: So all shall turn degenerate, all depraved; Justice and temperance, truth and faith, forgot; One man except, the only son of light In a dark age, against example good, Against allurement, custom, and a world Offended: fearless of reproach and scorn, Or violence, he of their wicked ways Shall them admonish: and before them set The paths of righteousness, how much more safe, And full of peace; denouncing wrath to come On their impenitence; and shall return

Of them derided. But of God observed, The one just man alive, by his command Shall build a wondrous ark, as thou beheld'st, To save himself and household from amidst A world devote to universal wrack. No sooner he, with them of man and beast Select for life, shall in the ark be lodged. And shelter'd round, but all the cataracts Of heaven set open on the earth shall pour Rain day and night; all fountains of the deep, Broke up, shall heave the ocean to usurp Beyond all bounds, till inundation rise Above the highest hills; then shall this mount Of Paradise by might of waves be moved Out of his place, push'd by the horned flood, With all his verdure spoil'd, and trees adrift, Down the great river to the opening gulf, And there take root, an island salt and bare, The haunt of seals, and orcs, and sea-mews' clang; To teach thee that God attributes to place No sanctity, if none be thither brought By men who there frequent, or therein dwell. And now, what further shall ensue, behold."

He look'd, and saw the ark hull on the flood,
Which now abated: for the clouds were fled,
Driven by a keen north wind, that, blowing dry,
Wrinkled the face of deluge, as decay'd;
And the clear sun on his wide watery glass
Gazed hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew,
As after thirst; which made their flowing shrink
From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole,
With soft foot, towards the deep, who now had stopt
His sluices, as the heaven his windows shut.
The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground,

Fast on the top of some high mountain fix'd. And now the tops of hills, as rocks, appear; With clamour thence the rapid currents drive, Towards the retreating sea, their furious tide. Forthwith from out the ark a raven flies; And after him, the surer messenger, A dove, sent forth once and again to spy Green tree or ground, whereon his foot may light: The second time returning, in his bill An olive-leaf he brings, pacific sign: Anon dry ground appears, and from his ark The ancient sire descends, with all his train: Then, with uplifted hands, and eyes devout, Grateful to Heaven, over his head beholds A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow Conspicuous, with three listed colours gay, Betokening peace from God, and covenant new. Whereat the heart of Adam, erst so sad, Greatly rejoiced, and thus his joy broke forth:

"O thou, who future things canst represent
As present, heavenly instructor, I revive
At this last sight; assured that man shall live,
With all the creatures, and their seed preserve.
Far less I now lament for one whole world
Of wicked sons destroy'd, than I rejoice
For one man found so perfect, and so just,
That God vouchsafes to raise another world
From him, and all his anger to forget.
But say, what mean those colour'd streaks in heaven
Distended, as the brow of God appeased?
Or serve they, as a flowery verge, to bind
The fluid skirts of that same watery cloud,
Lest it again dissolve, and shower the earth?"
To whom the archangel: "Dextrously thou aim'st

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So willingly doth God remit his ire. Though late repenting him of man deprayed: Grieved at his heart, when, looking down, he saw The whole earth fill'd with violence, and all flesh Corrupting each their way: yet, those removed, Such grace shall one just man find in his sight, That he relents, not to blot out mankind; And makes a covenant, never to destroy The earth again by flood, nor let the sea Surpass his bounds, nor rain to drown the world, With man therein or beast; but when he brings Over the earth a cloud, will therein set His triple-colour'd bow, whereon to look And call to mind his covenant. Day and night, Seed-time and harvest, heat and hoary frost, Shall hold their course, till fire purge all things new, Both heaven and earth, wherein the just shall dwell."

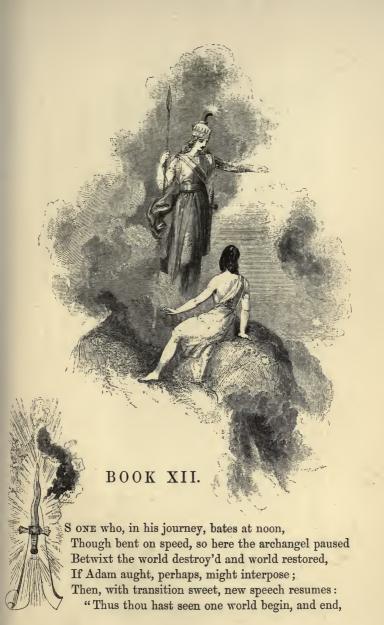


PARADISE LOST.

BOOK XII.

THE ARGUMENT.

The angel Michael continues, from the flood, to relate what shall succeed: then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain who that Seed of the woman shall be which was promised Adam and Eve in the fall: his incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension; the state of the church till his second coming. Adam, greatly satisfied and recomforted by these relations and promises, descends the hill with Michael; wakens Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams composed to quietness of mind and submission. Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise, the fiery sword waving behind them, and the cherubim taking their stations to guard the place.



And man, as from a second stock, proceed.

Much thou hast yet to see; but I perceive
Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine
Must needs impair and weary human sense:
Henceforth what is to come I will relate;
Thou, therefore, give due audience, and attend:

"This second source of men, while yet but few, And while the dread of judgment past remains Fresh in their minds, fearing the Deity, With some regard to what is just and right Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace; Labouring the soil, and reaping plenteous crops, Corn, wine, and oil; and, from the herd or flock, Oft sacrificing bullock, lamb, or kid, With large wine offerings pour'd, and sacred feast, Shall spend their days in joy unblamed, and dwell Long time in peace, by families and tribes, Under paternal rule, till one shall rise, Of proud, ambitious heart, who, not content With fair equality, fraternal state, Will arrogate dominion undeserved Over his brethren, and quite dispossess Concord and law of nature from the earth: Hunting (and men, not beasts, shall be his game), With war, and hostile snare, such as refuse Subjection to his empire tyrannous; A mighty hunter thence he shall be styled Before the Lord, as, in despite of heaven, Or from heaven, claiming second sovereignty; And from rebellion shall derive his name. Though of rebellion others he accuse. He, with a crew, whom like ambition joins With him, or under him, to tyrannize, Marching from Eden towards the west, shall find

The plain, wherein a black, bituminous gurge Boils out from under ground, the mouth of hell: Of brick, and of that stuff, they cast to build A city and tower, whose top may reach to heaven, And get themselves a name, lest, far dispersed In foreign lands, their memory be lost: Regardless whether good or evil fame. But God, who oft descends to visit men Unseen, and through their habitations walks, To mark their doings, them beholding soon, Comes down to see their city, ere the tower Obstruct heaven-towers, and in derision sets Upon their tongues a various spirit, to rase Quite out their native language, and, instead, To sow a jangling noise of words unknown. Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud Among the builders: each to other calls, Not understood, till hoarse, and all in rage, As mock'd they storm. Great laughter was in heaven, And looking down, to see the hubbub strange, And hear the din. Thus was the building left Ridiculous, and the work Confusion named."

Whereto thus Adam, fatherly displeased:

"O execrable son! so to aspire
Above his brethren; to himself assuming
Authority usurp'd, from God not given:
He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,
Dominion absolute; that right we hold
By his donation: but man over men
He made not lord; such title to himself
Reserving, human left from human free.
But this usurper his encroachment proud
Stays not on man; to God his tower intends
Siege and defiance! Wretched man! what food

PARADISE LOST.

Will he convey up thither, to sustain Himself and his rash army, where thin air, Above the clouds, will pine his entrails gross, And famish him of breath, if not of bread?"

To whom thus Michael: "Justly thou abhorr'st That son, who on the quiet state of men Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue Rational liberty; yet know withal, Since thy original lapse, true liberty Is lost, which always with right reason dwells, Twinn'd, and from her hath no dividual being. Reason in man obscured, or not obey'd, Immediately inordinate desires, And upstart passions, catch the government From reason, and to servitude reduce Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits, Within himself, unworthy powers to reign Over free reason, God, in judgment just, Subjects him from without to violent lords, Who oft as undeservedly enthral His outward freedom: tyranny must be, Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse. Yet sometimes nations will decline so low From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong, But justice, and some fatal curse annex'd, Deprives them of their outward liberty; Their inward lost. Witness the irreverent son Of him who built the ark, who, for the shame Done to his father, heard this heavy curse, 'Servant of servants,' on his vicious race. Thus will this latter, as the former world, Still tend from bad to worse, till God, at last, Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw His presence from among them, and avert

His holy eyes, resolving from thenceforth To leave them to their own polluted ways, And one peculiar nation to select From all the rest, of whom to be invoked, A nation from one faithful man to spring: Him on this side Euphrates yet residing, Bred up in idol worship. O that men (Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown, While yet the patriarch lived who 'scaped the flood, As to forsake the living God, and fall To worship their own work in wood and stone For gods! yet him, God the Most High vouchsafes To call, by vision, from his father's house, His kindred, and false gods, into a land Which he will show him; and from him will raise A mighty nation, and upon him shower His benediction so, that in his seed All nations shall be blest: he straight obeys, Not knowing to what land, yet firm believes. I see him, but thou canst not, with what faith He leaves his gods, his friends, and native soil, Ur of Chaldea, passing now the ford To Haran; after him a cumbrous train Of herds and flocks, and numerous servitude; Not wandering poor, but trusting all his wealth With God, who call'd him, in a land unknown. Canaan he now attains: I see his tents Pitch'd about Sechem, and the neighbouring plain Of Moreh; there, by promise, he receives Gift to his progeny of all that land, From Hamath northward to the desert south (Things by their names I call, though yet unnamed); From Hermon east, to the great western sea-Mount Hermon, yonder sea; each place behold VOL. I. 3 A

In prospect, as I point them: on the shore, Mount Carmel; here, the double-founted stream, Jordan, true limit eastward: but his sons Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of hills. This ponder, that all nations of the earth Shall in his seed be blessed: by that seed Is meant thy great Deliverer, who shall bruise The serpent's head: whereof to thee anon Plainlier shall be reveal'd. This patriarch blest, Whom faithful Abraham due time shall call, A son, and of his son a grandchild, leaves, Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown; The grandchild, with twelve sons increased, departs From Canaan to a land hereafter call'd Egypt, divided by the river Nile; See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths Into the sea: to sojourn in that land He comes, invited by a younger son In time of dearth—a son, whose worthy deeds Raise him to be the second in that realm Of Pharaoh: there he dies, and leaves his race Growing into a nation; and, now grown Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests Too numerous; whence of guests he makes them slaves Inhospitably, and kills their infant males: Till by two brethren (those two brethren call Moses and Aaron), sent from God to claim His people from enthralment, they return, With glory and spoil, back to their promised land. But first, the lawless tyrant, who denies To know their God, or message to regard. Must be compell'd by signs and judgments dire; To blood unshed the rivers must be turn'd;

Frogs, lice, and flies, must all his palace fill With loathed intrusion, and fill all the land; His cattle must of rot and murrain die: Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss, And all his people; thunder mix'd with hail, Hail mix'd with fire, must rend the Egyptian sky, And wheel on the earth, devouring where it rolls; What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or grain, A darksome cloud of locusts swarming down Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green; Darkness must overshadow all his bounds, Palpable darkness, and blot out three days; Last, with one midnight-stroke, all the first-born Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus, with ten wounds, The river-dragon, tamed, at length submits To let his sojourners depart, and oft Humbles his stubborn heart, but still as ice More harden'd after thaw; till, in his rage Pursuing whom he late dismiss'd, the sea Swallows him with his host, but them lets pass, As on dry land, between two crystal walls; Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand Divided, till his rescued gain their shore: Such wondrous power God to his saint will lend. Though present in his angel, who shall go Before them in a cloud, and pillar of fire: By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire; To guide them in their journey, and remove Behind them, while the obdurate king pursues. All night he will pursue, but his approach Darkness defends between till morning watch; Then through the fiery pillar and the cloud, God, looking forth, will trouble all his host, And craze their chariot-wheels: when, by command,



Moses once more his potent rod extends
Over the sea; the sea his rod obeys;
On their embattled ranks the waves return,
And overwhelm their war; the race elect
Safe towards Canaan, from the shore, advance
Through the wild desert; not the readiest way,
Lest, entering on the Canaanite alarmed,
War terrify them, inexpert, and fear
Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather
Inglorious life with servitude; for life,

To noble and ignoble, is more sweet Untrain'd in arms, where rashness leads not on. This also shall they gain by their delay In the wide wilderness; there they shall found Their government, and their great senate choose Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws ordain'd; God, from the mount of Sinai, whose gray top Shall tremble, he descending, will himself, In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpets' sound, Ordain them laws; part, such as appertain To civil justice; part, religious rites Of sacrifice; informing them, by types And shadows, of that destined Seed to bruise The serpent, by what means he shall achieve Mankind's deliverance. But the voice of God To mortal ear is dreadful: they beseech That Moses might report to them his will, And terror cease; he grants what they besought, Instructed that to God is no access Without mediator, whose high office now Moses in figure bears, to introduce One greater, of whose day he shall foretel, And all the prophets, in their age, the times Of great Messiah shall sing. Thus, laws and rites Establish'd, such delight hath God in men Obedient to his will, that he vouchsafes Among them to set up his tabernacle-The Holy One with mortal men to dwell: By his prescript a sanctuary is framed Of cedar, overlaid with gold; therein An ark, and in the ark his testimony, The records of his covenant; over these A mercy-seat of gold, between the wings Of two bright cherubim; before him burn

Seven lamps, as in a zodiac, representing The heavenly fires; over the tent a cloud Shall rest by day, a fiery gleam by night, Save when they journey, and at length they come, Conducted by his angel, to the land Promised to Abraham and his seed. The rest Were long to tell; how many battles fought; How many kings destroy'd, and kingdoms won; Or how the sun shall in mid heaven stand still A day entire, and night's due course adjourn, Man's voice commanding, 'Sun, in Gibeon stand, And thou, moon, in the vale of Ajalon, Till Israel overcome!' so call the third From Abraham, son of Isaac, and from him His whole descent, who thus shall Canaan win."

Here Adam interposed: "O sent from heaven, Enlightener of my darkness, gracious things
Thou hast reveal'd, those chiefly which concern
Just Abraham and his seed: now first I find
Mine eyes true opening, and my heart much eased,
Erewhile perplex'd with thoughts, what would become
Of me and all mankind: but now I see
His day, in whom all nations shall be blest;
Favour unmerited by me, who sought
Forbidden knowledge by forbidden means.
This yet I apprehend not; why to those
Among whom God will deign to dwell on earth,
So many and so various laws are given?
So many laws argue so many sins
Among them; how can God with such reside?"

To whom thus Michael: "Doubt not but that sin Will reign among them, as of thee begot; And, therefore, was law given them, to evince Their natural pravity, by stirring up

Sin against law to fight: that when they see Law can discover sin, but not remove, Save by those shadowy expiations weak, The blood of bulls and goats, they may conclude Some blood more precious must be paid for man; Just for unjust; that in such righteousness, To them by faith imputed, they may find Justification towards God, and peace Of conscience, which the law by ceremonies Cannot appease, nor man the moral part Perform, and, not performing, cannot live. So law appears imperfect, and but given With purpose to resign them, in full time, Up to a better covenant, disciplined From shadowy types to truth; from flesh to spirit; From imposition of strict laws to free Acceptance of large grace; from servile fear To filial: works of law to works of faith. And, therefore, shall not Moses, though of God Highly beloved, being but the minister Of law, his people into Canaan lead; But Joshua, whom the Gentiles Jesus call, His name and office bearing, who shall quell The adversary serpent, and bring back, Through the world's wilderness, long-wander'd man Safe to eternal Paradise of rest. Meanwhile they, in their earthly Canaan placed, Long time shall dwell and prosper; but when sins National interrupt their public peace, Provoking God to raise them enemies; From whom as oft he saves them penitent, By judges first, then under kings; of whom The second, both for piety renown'd And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive

Irrevocable, that his regal throne For ever shall endure: the like shall sing All prophecy, that of the royal stock Of David (so I name this king) shall rise A Son, the woman's seed to thee foretold, Foretold to Abraham, as in whom shall trust All nations; and to kings foretold, of kings The last; for of his reign shall be no end. But first, a long succession must ensue; And his next son, for wealth and wisdom famed, The clouded ark of God, till then in tents Wandering, shall in a glorious temple enshrine. Such follow him as shall be register'd Part good, part bad; of bad the longer scroll: Whose foul idolatries, and other faults, Heap'd to the popular sum, will so incense God, as to leave them, and expose their land, Their city, his temple, and his holy ark, With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey To that proud city, whose high walls thou saw'st Left in confusion; Babylon thence call'd. There in captivity he lets them dwell The space of seventy years; then brings them back, Remembering mercy, and his covenant sworn To David, 'stablish'd as the days of heaven. Return'd from Babylon by leave of kings, Their lords, whom God disposed, the house of God They first re-edify, and for awhile In mean estate live moderate, till, grown In wealth and multitude, factious they grow: But first among the priests dissension springs; Men who attend the altar, and should most Endeavour peace: their strife pollution brings Upon the temple itself; at last they seize

The sceptre, and regard not David's sons;
Then lose it to a stranger, that the true
Anointed King Messiah might be born
Barr'd of his right; yet at his birth a star,
Unseen before in heaven, proclaims him come,
And guides the eastern sages, who inquire
His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold:
His place of birth a solemn angel tells
To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night;
They gladly thither haste, and by a quire



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Of squadron'd angels hear his carol sung.
A virgin is his mother, but his sire
The power of the Most High: he shall ascend
The throne hereditary, and bound his reign
With earth's wide bounds, his glory with the heavens."

He ceased; discerning Adam, with such joy Surcharged, as had, like grief, been dew'd in tears, Without the vent of words; which these he breathed:

"O prophet of glad tidings, finisher
Of utmost hope! now clear I understand
What oft my steadiest thoughts have search'd in vain;
Why our great Expectation should be call'd
The seed of woman: virgin mother, hail!
High in the love of Heaven; yet from my loins
Thou shalt proceed, and from thy womb the Son
Of God Most High; so God with man unites.
Needs must the serpent now his capital bruise
Expect with mortal pain; say where and when
Their fight; what stroke shall bruise the Victor's heel?"

To whom thus Michael: "Dream not of their fight, As of a duel, or the local wounds
Of head or heel: not, therefore, joins the Son
Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
Thy enemy; nor so is overcome
Satan, whose fall from heaven, a deadlier bruise,
Disabled not to give thee thy death's wound:
Which he, who comes thy Saviour, shall recure,
Not by destroying Satan, but his works
In thee, and in thy seed: nor can this be,
But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,
Obedience to the law of God, imposed
On penalty of death; and suffering death,
The penalty to thy transgression due,
And due to theirs, which out of thine will grow:

So only can high justice rest appaid. The law of God exact he shall fulfil Both by obedience and by love, though love Alone fulfil the law; thy punishment He shall endure, by coming in the flesh To a reproachful life and cursed death; Proclaiming life to all who shall believe In his redemption, and that his obedience, Imputed, becomes theirs by faith; his merits To save them, not their own, though legal, works. For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed, Seized on by force, judged, and to death condemn'd, A shameful and accursed, nail'd to the cross By his own nation; slain for bringing life: But to the cross he nails thy enemies, The law that is against thee, and the sins Of all mankind with him there crucified, Never to hurt them more who rightly trust In this his satisfaction. So he dies. But soon revives; death over him no power Shall long usurp; ere the third dawning light, Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light, Thy ransom paid, which man from death redeems, His death form man, as many as offer'd life Neglect not, and the benefit embrace By faith not void of works. This godlike act Annuls thy doom, the death thou shouldst have died, In sin for ever lost from life: this act Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength, Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms; And fix far deeper in his head their stings Than temporal death shall bruise the Victor's heel, Or theirs whom he redeems; a death, like sleep,

A gentle wafting to immortal life. Nor after resurrection shall he stay Longer on earth than certain times to appear To his disciples, men who in his life Still follow'd him; to them shall leave in charge To teach all nations what of him they learn'd, And his salvation; them who shall believe Baptizing in the profluent stream, the sign Of washing them from guilt of sin to life Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befal, For death, like that which the Redeemer died. All nations they shall teach; for, from that day, Not only to the sons of Abraham's loins Salvation shall be preach'd, but to the sons Of Abraham's faith wherever through the world; So in his seed all nations shall be blest. Then to the heaven of heavens he shall ascend, With victory, triumphing through the air Over his foes and thine; there shall surprise The serpent, prince of air, and drag in chains Through all his realm, and there confounded leave; Then enter into glory, and resume His seat at God's right hand, exalted high Above all names in heaven; and thence shall come, When this world's dissolution shall be ripe, With glory and power, to judge both quick and dead; To judge the unfaithful dead, but to reward His faithful, and receive them into bliss, Whether in heaven or earth; for then the earth Shall all be Paradise, far happier place Than this of Eden, and far happier days." So spake the archangel Michael; then paused, As at the world's great period; and our sire,

Replete with joy and wonder, thus replied:

"O goodness infinite, goodness immense! That all this good of evil shall produce, And evil turn to good; more wonderful Than that which by creation first brought forth Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand, Whether I should repent me now of sin By me done, and occasion'd, or rejoice Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring; To God more glory, more good-will to men From God, and over wrath grace shall abound. But say, if our Deliverer up to heaven Must reascend, what will betide the few, His faithful, left among the unfaithful herd, The enemies of truth? Who, then, shall guide His people—who defend? Will they not deal Worse with his followers than with him they dealt?"

"Be sure they will," said the angel; "but from heaven He to his own a Comforter will send, The promise of the Father, who shall dwell His Spirit within them; and the law of faith, Working through love, upon their hearts shall write, To guide them in all truth, and also arm With spiritual armour, able to resist Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts; What man can do against them, not afraid, Though to the death; against such cruelties With inward consolations recompensed, And oft supported so as shall amaze Their proudest persecutors; for the Spirit, Pour'd first on his apostles, whom he sends To evangelize the nations, then on all Baptized, shall them with wondrous gifts endue To speak all tongues, and do all miracles, As did their Lord before them. Thus they win

Great numbers of each nation to receive With joy the tidings brought from heaven: at length, Their ministry perform'd, and race well run, Their doctrine and their story written left. They die; but in their room, as they forewarn, Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves, Who all the sacred mysteries of heaven To their own vile advantages shall turn, Of lucre and ambition; and the truth With superstitions and traditions taint, Left only in those written records pure, Though not but by the Spirit understood. Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names, Places, and titles, and with these to join Secular power, though feigning still to act By spiritual, to themselves appropriating The Spirit of God, promised alike, and given To all believers; and, from that pretence, Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force On every conscience; laws, which none shall find Left them enroll'd, or what the Spirit within Shall on the heart engrave. What will they, then, But force the Spirit of Grace itself, and bind His consort Liberty? what but unbuild His living temples, built by faith to stand, Their own faith, not another's? for, on earth, Who against faith and conscience can be heard Infallible? Yet many will presume: Whence heavy persecution shall arise On all who in the worship persevere, Of spirit and truth; the rest, far greater part, Will deem in outward rites and specious forms Religion satisfied; truth shall retire Bestuck with slanderous darts, and works of faith

Rarely be found. So shall the world go on,
To good malignant, to bad men benign,
Under her own weight groaning, till the day
Appear of respiration to the just,
And vengeance to the wicked, at return
Of him so lately promised to thy aid,
The woman's Seed; obscurely then foretold,
Now amplier known thy Saviour and thy Lord;
Last, in the clouds, from heaven to be reveal'd,
In glory of the Father, to dissolve
Satan with his perverted world; then raise
From the conflagrant mass, purged and refined,
New heavens, new earth, ages of endless date,
Founded in righteousness, and peace, and love;
To bring forth fruits, joy and eternal bliss."

He ended; and thus Adam last replied: "How soon hath thy prediction, seer blest, Measured this transient world, the race of time. Till time stand fix'd! Beyond is all abyss, Eternity, whose end no eye can reach. Greatly instructed I shall hence depart: Greatly in peace of thought; and have my fill Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain; Beyond which was my folly to aspire. Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best, And love, with fear, the only God; to walk As in his presence, ever to observe His providence, and on him sole depend, Merciful over all his works, with good Still overcoming evil, and by small Accomplishing great things; by things deem'd weak Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise By simply meek; that suffering for truth's sake Is fortitude to highest victory;

And, to the faithful, death the gate of life; Taught this by his example, whom I now Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest."

To whom thus also the angel last replied: "This having learn'd, thou hast attain'd the sum Of wisdom hope no higher, though all the stars Thou knew'st by name, and all the ethereal powers, All secrets of the deep, all nature's works, Or works of God in heaven, air, earth, or sea, And all the riches of this world enjoy'dst, And all the rule, one empire; only add Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith, Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love, By name to come call'd charity, the soul Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loth To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess A Paradise within thee, happier far. Let us descend now, therefore, from this top Of speculation; for the hour precise Exacts our parting hence; and, see! the guards, By me encamp'd on yonder hill, expect Their motion, at whose front a flaming sword, In signal of remove, waves fiercely round. We may no longer stay: go, waken Eve; Her also I with gentle dreams have calm'd, Portending good, and all her spirits composed To meek submission: thou, at season fit, Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard; Chiefly, what may concern her faith to know, The great deliverance by her seed to come (For by the woman's seed) on all mankind; That ye may live, which will be many days, Both in one faith unanimous, though sad, With cause, for evils past, yet much more cheer'd

With meditation on the happy end."
He ended, and they both descend the hill;
Descended, Adam to the bower, where Eve
Lay sleeping, ran before, but found her waked;
And thus with words not sad she him received:

"Whence thou return'st, and whither went'st, I For God is also in sleep; and dreams advise, [know; Which he hath sent propitious, some great good Presaging, since, with sorrow and heart's distress Wearied, I fell asleep: but now lead on—In me is no delay: with thee to go, Is to stay here; without thee here to stay, Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me Art all things under heaven, all places thou, Who for my wilful crime art banish'd hence. This further consolation yet secure I carry hence; though all by me is lost, Such favour I, unworthy, am vouchsafed, By me the promised Seed shall all restore."

So spake our mother Eve; and Adam heard, Well pleased, but answer'd not; for now, too nigh The archangel stood; and from the other hill To their fix'd station, all in bright array, The cherubim descended, on the ground Gliding meteorous, as evening mist, Risen from a river, o'er the marish glides, And gathers ground fast at the labourer's heel, Homeward returning. High in front advanced, The brandish'd sword of God before them blazed, Fierce as a comet; which, with torrid heat, And vapour as the Lybian air adust, Began to parch that temperate clime; whereat In either hand the hastening angel caught Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate

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Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain—then disappear'd.
They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces throng'd, and fiery arms.
Some natural tears they dropt, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide:
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.



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